



# PROCEDURES MANUAL

**SUBJECT:** Structure Fire Operations – Personal Decontamination

**NUMBER:**

203.01.17

**APPROVED:**

FIRE CHIEF

**TYPE:** Structure Fire Operations

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 12/2020

Page 1 of 4

**REVISED DATE:** 12/2020

## 203.01.17 Fireground Personal Decontamination

### A. Purpose

1. Institute on scene personal decontamination to remove the largest quantities of potential carcinogenic material from personal protective equipment and the firefighter.
2. Reduce or eliminate contamination of the fire apparatus and the fire house from products of combustion from the fire scene.

### B. Policy

1. All personnel being exposed to a toxic/hazardous environment shall go through a decontamination process of their PPE and their persons.
2. This policy will outline detailed decontamination procedures used upon exiting a structure fire, vehicle fire, trash fire, dumpster fire, training fire to include flashover and/or miscellaneous fires where exposure to smoke, byproducts of combustion and/or debris is possible.
3. This policy is a comprehensive document including PPE exchange, SCBA and equipment decontamination, and personal hygiene after the fire.

### C. Objectives

1. Limit and reduce the exposure of firefighters to products of combustion after exiting the IDLH atmosphere.
2. Establish a gross decon corridor for all incidents when firefighters exit an IDLH atmosphere and PPE has been exposed to products of combustion.

### D. Fireground Decontamination

1. Decon shall not be required until the firefighter has completely finished their fire ground tasks and will not have continued involvement in

firefighting or overhaul operations for the duration of the incident. During incidents of long duration when multiple work cycles are employed, firefighters will go through decon on their way to rehab. This shall be at the discretion of the Incident Commander (IC) or the Safety Officer (SO2).

2. Once the “Water on the fire” benchmark is received, an available Fire Apparatus Operator (FAO) on the first or second arriving engine will be assigned by the IC to set up for post fire decontamination. The timing and location of decontamination set-up will be at the discretion of the IC, or his/her designee, but prior to personnel doffing equipment.
3. The Incident Commander, the Safety Officer (SO2) and the Company Officer shall determine the companies (or individuals) to be decontaminated. Nothing precludes a member from going through decon should they feel the need. The following guidelines should be used to determine if personal protective equipment is soiled to the extent that decon is necessary:
  - a. Obvious odor that cannot be removed or indicates contamination. (diesel fuel for example)
  - b. Visible soil.
  - c. Known exposure to bio-hazards.
  - d. Suspected exposure to hazardous chemicals or CBRN.
4. The following decontamination equipment will be carried on all engine companies:
  - a. Decontamination Bucket:
    - i. 10” garden hose w/ adaptor and spray nozzle
    - ii. Scrub brush
    - iii. Decontamination wipes
    - iv. “Red” bio hazard bags
    - v. Clear Garbage bags (large)
    - vi. PPE Tracking Labels
    - vii. Wire Ties
    - viii. Garbage bags (small).
5. Contaminated members are encouraged to decon each other however any other available member may be assigned to assist. Members assigned to decontamination shall protect themselves from exposures related to firefighters exiting the structure. SCBA should be considered. At a minimum, EMS gloves and an MSA-2000 mask with appropriate filters, shall be worn by those personnel providing decontamination efforts.
6. Upon exiting the structure, the firefighter shall report to the established decontamination area, brush off loose debris and hose off bunker gear and SCBA. Contaminated firefighters with lower air should be decontaminated first. A scrub brush will be used as necessary.

7. Firefighters will proceed to a staging area near Rehab where PPE shall be removed so that the firefighter remains on air as long as possible.
8. Personal decontamination wipes will be used to clean all exposed skin areas. This will include the neck, face, behind the ears, hands, arms and eyes. Use a new wipe for each body area. Decontamination wipes shall be used on the fire helmet brow pad and ratchet pad. Place contaminated wipes in small garbage bag.
9. Firefighters will then be released from the decontamination area and are to report to REHAB as deemed necessary by the IC.
10. Once fire ground operations are complete, each firefighter/exposed personnel shall, while wearing EMS gloves, place their soiled PPE (Fire coat, Bunker pants and gloves) in a black plastic bag for transport back to the firehouse for advanced cleaning and gear exchange. Depending on nature of soiling, a black bag or a red bio-hazard bag for PPE that is contaminated with a bio-hazard (body fluids) shall be utilized. In all cases a PPE Tracking tag shall be filled out completely and attached to each bag of soiled gear.
11. Large plastic bags will be stocked on all apparatus.
12. Protective hoods will be exchanged with SO2 on a 1 for 1 basis on the scene. SO2 will ensure that the contaminated hoods are laundered and ready for future exchange. SO2 will carry a sufficient supply of hoods to accommodate multiple fires in one tour.
13. All tools, equipment and SCBA shall be decontaminated at the scene wearing EMS gloves. Do not return to quarters with contaminated tools and equipment.
14. During cold inclement weather the process of soaking firefighters while performing a wet decontamination may create additional safety hazards such as hypothermia, and equipment failure.
  - a. Brush off all large particles from the PPE, working from the head down.
  - b. Use damp towels to wipe the area around the firefighters face piece to suspend any particulate matter.
  - c. Attempt to remove all of the visible contaminants

#### E. Decontamination at the Firehouse

1. Fire companies may stay out of service for up to one hour for personal decontamination. Consider holding the move-up company in place until the company has completed the decontamination process. This does not prevent the company officer from going back in service sooner if all members of the company have completed the decontamination shower prior to the one-hour interval. Company officers may use discretion to respond to another priority response (Cardiac arrest, Structure fire, etc)

while out of service for decontamination. Members should complete the following tasks upon return to quarters:

2. Place all bagged fire clothes on the apparatus floor for pickup by stores for cleaning. Make sure bags are properly sealed and PPE tracking tags are securely attached.
3. Inspect helmet, boots, tools and equipment to determine if further cleaning is required.
4. Clean face piece according to the CFD Drill Manual Topic 13.
5. It is required that all members take a shower within one hour of arrival back in the fire house.
6. Change into a clean uniform.
7. Wash dirty uniform using the department provided washer and dryer.
8. Place spare fire clothes on the track.
9. Return apparatus to state of readiness.
10. Officer shall notify stores of PPE needing to be picked up and cleaned