

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE - 4.6.1

TOPIC - SAFETY: RESPIRATORY PROTECTION - SCBA

PURPOSE:

To provide a uniform approach to respiratory protection while working where toxic atmospheres or an oxygen deficiency may be present.

GENERAL:

Under emergency response activities, fire service personnel are often called upon to work in areas where the atmosphere may be hazardous to health. To perform effectively in those situations, personnel must be able to utilize equipment designed to provide safety and survivability with confidence. The correct use of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is our most reliable defense against atmospheres which are toxic or oxygen deficient.

GUIDELINE:

Training:

1. During the basic firefighter recruit academy, all entry level personnel will be instructed in the following areas regarding SCBA:
 - a. Identification of hazardous atmospheres.
 - b. Identification of limitations of SCBA.
 - c. Identification of all major components of the SCBA.
 - d. Correct procedures for donning and removal of SCBA.
 - e. Correct procedures to assure proper fit and seal of the face piece.
 - f. Correct procedures to determine the readiness of the equipment.
 - g. Correct procedures concerning the use and function of SCBA components including the emergency bypass valve.
 - h. Correct procedures for changing cylinders.
 - i. Correct procedures for inspecting, cleaning and sanitizing SCBA.
2. During routine, subsequent training sessions the items listed above will be reinforced, as appropriate, for all personnel.
3. As appropriate, personnel will be trained in more advanced procedures concerning SCBA as described in State Accreditation for Firefighter I curriculum.
4. It is expected, that with practice, a firefighter will be able to correctly don SCBA within one (1) minute from a specified time.
5. Firefighter personnel shall demonstrate proficiency in the use and limitations of SCBA on an annual basis.

Fit:

1. OR-OSHA has identified that the effectiveness of any respirator, including SCBA, is related to the efficiency of the face-piece-to-face seal. The following factors may contribute to an ineffective face-piece-to-face seal: growth of a beard, sideburns, temple pieces on eye glasses, absence of dentures, other hair or item which may prohibit direct surface to surface contact between the sealing surface of the face-piece and the face.
2. Each firefighter will be tested for facepiece fit through approved fit testing procedures.

Use:

1. Interior, structural fire fighting shall require the use of SCBA by all personnel making entry for suppression, rescue, or other related activities.
2. Firefighters are required to wear SCBA during vehicle fire suppression activities.
3. SCBA shall be worn during any activity where the atmosphere may be toxic or whenever there is, or may be, an oxygen deficiency. Examples may include but are not limited to:
 - a. During over haul procedures for a structure or vehicle fire.
 - b. Whenever personnel are required to make an entry below ground level, or into any confined space.
 - c. Whenever it is suspected that a hazardous or toxic material may be present in the area of operation.
4. Self Contained Breathing Apparatus may be removed only after adequate ventilation and monitoring procedures have been conducted. Ventilation and monitoring procedures must be thorough enough to assure that there is no significant hazard to life or health for personnel.
5. Wherever there is any doubt regarding the quality of an atmosphere personnel shall utilize SCBA.
6. Whenever a firefighter has worked continuously while wearing SCBA for a period of time consuming two (2), thirty (30) minute air cylinders, that firefighter shall be reassigned to rehabilitation for a period of no less than ten (10) minutes.

Maintenance:

1. All SCBA shall be inspected, cleaned, and sanitized after each use following established procedures including:

- a. Inspection of all connections, condition of face piece, head bands, valves, gauges, harness, and tubes.
 - b. Cleaning of all components.
 - c. Sanitation of face piece.
2. Disassembly and assembly of the face piece shall only be done by qualified personnel.
3. Whenever a faulty component is discovered through the inspection process, that component will be removed from service until such time that repair or replacement occurs.
4. Repair of any major component shall only be done by qualified personnel.
5. SCBA shall be more thoroughly inspected on a monthly basis, including:
 - a. A test for air tightness of cylinders and cylinder valves.
 - b. A test of the operation of reducing valves and bypass valves.
 - c. A test of low-air alarm function.