



# The Training Brief

Quick Reference mini-training Topics

## Cancer Prevention Best Practices for PPE

The purpose of this training topic is to establish best practice for the use, maintenance and inspection of personal protective equipment (PPE) to limit exposures from fireground toxicants.

### Discussion

#### Fact:

Many firefighters believe that a dirty set of PPE is a badge of honor. This is not fact. Having dirty contaminated PPE is making firefighters sick. Occupational cancer has become an epidemic. One of many steps a firefighter can take to protect themselves is to keep PPE clean and follow recommendations set forth NFPA 1851.

#### Key Points:

- PPE should not be worn in any living areas of the fire station.
- Clean PPE after exposure to carcinogens and every six (6) months.
- Store PPE away from diesel exhaust.
- Follow NFPA 1851 recommendation on retirement of PPE.
- Have a second clean set of PPE available.



**Make the necessary changes**

#### General Guidelines:

Structure fire PPE should undergo Advanced Cleaning at a minimum of every 6 months or as soon as possible after clothing has been subject to contamination. (NFPA 1851 7.3.4 2020 version).

Clothing should be kept in good repair with no rips, tears or holes.

All PPE should be prohibited from inside the living areas of the fire station. It is recommended to have two sets of wildland and structural PPE ensembles for each member (hoods, gloves etc.).

Inspect all PPE for any damage, rips, tears, cuts, and thermal damage.

#### Cleaning:

NFPA standards identify and define three primary types of cleaning:

- Preliminary Exposure Reduction.
- Advanced.
- Specialized.

Soiled and contaminated PPE should **NOT** be taken home to be laundered or washed in public laundry places.

Advanced cleaning of PPE should occur every six (6) months or whenever the ensemble is exposed to products of combustion. (NFPA 1851 7.3.4 2020 version).

Advanced cleaning should be done by trained personnel or an Independent service provider (ISP).

#### Storage:

PPE should be stored in away from any diesel exhaust which is a known carcinogen.

#### Retirement of PPE:

The following list are some best practices for PPE retirement for individual fire department to outline retirement standards:

- More than 10 years from the date that the element was manufactured.
- Damaged beyond repair or not cost effective to repair.
- Contaminated to the extent that it is not possible or cost effective to decontaminate.
- Any PPE element that has been exposed to chemical, biological, radiation, nuclear (CBRN) or terrorism agents must be immediately retired after confirmed exposure and not subjected to cleaning or decontamination.