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## **I. Policy**

- A. This general order shall establish standards for personal protective clothing (turnout gear ensembles and ensemble elements) worn by the Prince George Fire/EMS Combination department members to ensure maximum safety and identification during emergency fire/EMS operations.
- B. The proper utilization of protective equipment is vital our team members' safety and is mandatory. The PGFEMS department is committed to providing quality protective equipment.

## **II. Purpose**

- A. The purpose of these Standard Operating Procedures is to establish guidelines for the inspection Cleaning, Decontamination, Repair, Storage, Retirement, and recordkeeping of firefighting protective ensembles and ensemble elements owned by and used for structural firefighting by paid and volunteer members of Prince George Fire/EMS (PGFEMS).
- B. In the establishment of this policy for firefighting protection ensembles and ensemble elements, PGFEMS will reduce the safety risks and potential health risks associated with poorly maintained, contaminated, or damaged firefighting protective ensembles and ensemble elements consistent with NFPA 1851 and shall apply to structural firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements and proximity firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements certified as compliant with the previous editions of NFPA 1971.
- C. The proper utilization, maintenance, and disposal of protective equipment is vital to the safety and wellbeing of all members of the PGFEMS and is mandatory. The Fire Department is committed to providing quality protective equipment; therefore, all members shall use and maintain all protective equipment in accordance with Prince George Fire/EMS procedures and manufacture specifications.



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### **III. Scope**

- A. The program's objective is to provide protective ensembles appropriate for their intended use and set requirements for the proper procurement, issuance, handling, care, maintenance, and retirement of protective ensembles.
- B. This document describes the program parts, establishes program procedures, and assigns roles and responsibilities to all paid and volunteer members of the PGFEMS for implementing and maintaining the program. The following complies with the current 2020 NFPA 1851 Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting, as well as NFPA 1971.

### **IV. Procedure/Responsibility**

- A. The use of personal protective equipment will be Mandatory as a condition of Employment/Membership when specified by the department for hazard protection. Station Chiefs, and but not limited to Captains, Lieutenants, and Senior firefighters, will be held accountable for allowing personnel to work without the prescribed safety equipment.
- B. Only protective clothing and equipment issued and approved by PGFEMS shall be used by personnel on any fire/rescue incident. Protective clothing and equipment will comply with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 2020 edition and the current Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standards (OSHA).
- C. The only non-County purchased or issued PPE that is acceptable to be worn by members is the structural firefighting helmet. Any non-department-issued helmet must be approved by the member's Station Chief or PGFEMS Fire Chief before use and meet current NFPA/OSHA standards. The officer authorizing the use of a non-department-issued helmet must complete and sign the non-department issue helmet inspection and approval form (APPENDIX 1001) and forward it to the PGFEMS Logistics Officer.
- D. The Logistics Officer shall apply or have the Station Chief apply a corresponding department tracking label to the impact cap of the approved non-issued helmet for continued tracking. Replacement costs for member-supplied helmets and components are the responsibility of the member.



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- E. Any modification to a helmet shall require additional inspection and approval from the Station Chief or PGFEMS Fire Chief. Any aftermarket painting of a helmet shall be per the manufacturer's recommendations; paint must be flame resistant and be non-conductive to meet specific performance requirements. Thermoplastic helmets shall not be painted.

**V. Training**

New and current firefighters will receive training on the care, use, and maintenance of their assigned PPE before being allowed to participate in training or operations, including live-fire training. Whenever ensembles or ensemble components are replaced, changed, or improved, all department members shall receive additional training in the care, use, and maintenance of their assigned PPE.

**VI. Records**

- A. PGFEMS, through the designated County Logistics officer, shall compile and maintain records on all paid and volunteer members' firefighting protective ensembles and ensemble elements. Records will be kept for all structural firefighting protective equipment in use or stored. This includes all protective coats, pants, hoods, helmets, gloves, SCBA Facepiece, and boots permanently assigned to paid and volunteer personnel, as well as items available for temporary use.
- B. The Primary Prince George Fire/EMS Logistics Officer shall utilize the approved inventory software to develop and maintain a centralized database to track issuance, returns, inspection, maintenance, and supply of all personal protective equipment items. This informational database shall include but not be limited to the member/employee name and identification number, the Manufacture date of the turnout gear, serial numbers, departmental tracking numbers, model, size, last cleaning, inspection information, and any other pertinent information as required by current NFPA 1851 standards.



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## 1. Annual/Advanced Inspection Records

- i. While in use, all maintenance events will be recorded using the PGFEMS inspection form. It shall be the responsibility of the Volunteer Station Chiefs and Shift Commanders to ensure all their assigned member's maintenance and inspection records are completed by the required PGFEMS inspection dates listed in this policy.
- ii. Failure to provide the required inspection records will result in the member to whom the gear is assigned being suspended from duty pending inspection of and safety for the member's equipment is confirmed and recorded by the PGFEMS Logistics Officer. No Turnout gear is to be in use that is not recorded in the PGFEMS inventory tracking system. A report containing the tracking numbers and location of the gear can be requested through the logistics officer.
- iii. Only Trained and cleared members at an officer level shall perform the Advanced Inspections and complete the required documents. In addition, no one may inspect their own gear during the Annual or Advanced inspection. Other trained officers must perform this. A list of trained personnel and proof of training documents are to be forwarded to the Fire/EMS Administration office, where they will be placed in the individual's file and recorded as approved members.
- iv. Trained persons responsible for maintenance inspections will record the required information on the approved PGFEMS Turnout Gear Inspection Form. Once completed, the forms will be forwarded to the logistics officer and entered into the PGFEMS inventory management system.



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## 2. Information to be recorded during the inspection is as follows:

- i. All required information of the person to whom the element is issued
- ii. Manufacturer and model name.
- iii. Manufacturer's identification number
- iv. Month and year of manufacture
- v. Department Identification number
- vi. Date and findings of advanced inspections
- vii. Dates and findings of advanced cleaning or decontamination
- viii. Reason for advanced cleaning or decontamination
- ix. Date(s) of basic repair(s) and description of repair(s)
- x. Date(s) of advanced and moisture barrier repair(s), the contractor that performed repair(s), and description of repair

Performing brief daily and monthly inspections is recommended; completing the inspection form during this inspection is not required unless garment concerns are discovered.

## 3. Primary Ensemble Components

- i. Structural firefighting helmet (No member shall wear a non-OSHA/non-NFPA approved helmet).
- ii. Turnout coat
- iii. Bunker pants with suspenders
- iv. Structural firefighting boots
- v. Structural firefighting gloves
- vi. Flame resistive hood
- vii. Eye protection

### Additional Components

- viii. Hearing Protection
- ix. SCBA Mask/Respirator
- x. Wildland Firefighting ensembles



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## **VII. Guidelines for the use of PPE/Turnout Gear**

- A.** Appropriate PPE shall be worn while performing any function where a potential for injury and/or as directed by the supervisor and according to the manufacturers' recommendations.
- B.** The primary parts of the ensemble shall be worn while performing any function where there is a potential for injury or directed by the Incident Commander or Officer.
- C.** Any of the following are examples of incident responses that require responding members to don PPE but will not restrict the fire officer from the authority to mandate additional PPE be worn on any incident:
  - i.** Any incident where the possibility of an Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) atmosphere exists.
  - ii.** Suspected terrorist attacks
  - iii.** Hazardous materials incidents
  - iv.** Vehicle accidents with entrapment or other hazards
  - v.** All vehicle fires
  - vi.** Dumpster fires
  - vii.** All structural alarms
  - viii.** All gas leaks and flammable liquid spills

## **VIII. Helmet Color and Identification**

- A.** White – Chief Officers
- B.** Red – Captains and Lieutenants
- C.** Yellow – Fire Fighter
- D.** Orange – Non- IDLH, non- certified members
- E.** Blue – EMS only



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## **IX. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)**

- A. The SCBA is an integral part of each member's protective equipment. Each member shall be required to perform the pre-use check for the riding position that they are assigned.

The pre-use check shall be performed:

- At the beginning of each tour of duty
- When reporting to a detailed assignment or volunteer duty tour
- After each use, the driver for their apparatus shall be responsible for ensuring all SCBA is ready for use.

- B. SCBA shall be worn by all paid and volunteer members of the PGFEMS at all times while engaged in any operation that contains an atmosphere that is imminently dangerous to life or health (IDLH) or potential IDLH atmosphere. Usage is defined as the SCBA being charged, facepiece on the member's face, and breathing cylinder air.

### **1. SCBA FIT Testing and Facial hair**

- i. Facial Hair must be kept neat, clean and trimmed, and maintain a professional appearance. Hair must not be longer than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the bottom of the top lip to not interfere with a proper seal. Growth or changes in facial hair may require refitting a facepiece or N-95 mask in accordance with this policy. The team member must pass the SCBA, N-95, or current Hepa PPE mask. Full beards will not be allowed
- ii. The OSHA Respiratory Protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134) specifies certain requirements for employers to follow when their employees must wear respirators such as SCBA or N95 masks. The standard states that the employer cannot permit respirators with tight-fitting facepieces to be worn by employees who have facial hair between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face or that interferes with valve function. [1910.134(g)(1)(i)(B)].

Essentially, it does not matter if hair is allowed to grow on other areas of the face (e.g., hair grown at the temples), as long as it does not protrude



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under the respirator seal, or extend far enough to interfere with the device's function. A member required to wear a respirator may have hair that falls under the respirator straps, but is not permitted to have hair that interferes with the respirator's sealing surface. Facial hair in the temple region of the face may or may not impact the facial seal area of the respirator. Sideburns that don't enter the sealing surface area, for instance, are acceptable. However, thick sideburns that intrude into the sealing surface of the respirator are not permitted.

No fit testing shall be conducted if hair growth occurs between the skin and the facepiece sealing surface, such as stubble beard growth, beard, mustache or sideburns that cross the respirator sealing surface. Any apparel which interferes with a proper fit shall be altered or removed.

- iii. SCBA shall continue to be worn on all incidents until the Incident Commander has determined that:
  - There are no hazardous material or toxic products of combustion present.
  - Personnel are not operating in an oxygen-deficient atmosphere
- iv. Members using SCBA shall not compromise the protective integrity of the SCBA while operating in an IDLH, potential IDLH, or unknown atmospheres by removing the facepiece or disconnecting any portion of the SCBA that would allow contaminants to be inhaled.

## **X. Accountability**

- A. To provide the safest possible PPE ensemble, each member is responsible for ensuring that their gear is clean, serviceable, and up-to-date inspection, per this policy.
- B. Failure to comply with this procedure compromises the health and safety of our members.
- C. Members who do not comply with this procedure may be subject to disciplinary action.





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## **XI. Selection Process**

- A.** The PGFEMS PPE/Turnout gear Selection Committee, under the guidance of the Chief of Prince George Fire/EMS, researches new personal protective equipment, evaluates current personal protective equipment, and recommends replacement as necessary as illustrated in NFPA 1851 Chapter 5.
- B.** The Committee shall review the current edition of NFPA 1971, NFPA 1994, NFPA 1500, NFPA 600, and any applicable federal or state OSHA standards relating to structural firefighting protective ensembles and ensemble elements to determine how they affect the selection process.

### **1. Committee Member Selection**

- i.** The Committee will consist of three (3) volunteer representatives appointed by a consensus of each Station Chief and three (3) career representatives appointed by the career Shift Commanders. All appointed committee members shall have a working knowledge of NFPA 1851, NFPA 1971, NFPA 1994, NFPA 1500, NFPA 600 standards, training, and experience in PPE requirements for hazards within Prince George County. All committee members appointed are subject to final approval from the Prince George Fire/EMS Chief and shall be an active operational members cleared to use the SCBA equipment.

### **2. Risk Assessment**

- i.** Before starting the selection process of structural firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements and proximity firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements, the Committee shall perform a risk assessment and determine the best method for sourcing, compiling, and evaluating the information. See Attachment 1003
- ii.** The risk assessment shall include, but not be limited to, the hazards encountered by structural or proximity firefighters. The risk assessment must consist of as a minimum the following:
  - Type of duties performed



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- Frequency of use of ensemble elements
- Prince George Fire/EMS experiences
- Incident operations (Operational strategy and tactics)
- Geographic location and climate
- The specific physical area of operation
- Likelihood of or response to CBRN terrorism incident

### **3. Turnout Gear/PPE considerations**

- i. The purchase specifications will indicate the Committee's choices for the following required NFPA 1971 ensemble element components and shall employ the following consideration as to determining the brand of PPE:
  - Garments Outer shell material
  - Fabric, weight, color
  - PPE performance expectations to include thermal and physiological effects.
  - Style and design for user comfort and wear performance.
  - Construction for quality, durability, and garment service life.
  - Manufacturer capabilities to meet department performance demands, technical information, service, warranty, and customer support.
  - Thermal liner material
  - Moisture barrier material
  - Substrate, film, or coating
  - Trim: configuration, material, color
  - Closure system
  - Wristlets: material, design
  - Hoods Material Face opening design.
  - Gloves Composite materials
  - Wristlet or gauntlet and Wristlet material
  - Helmets Material
  - Other requirements deemed necessary by the Committee.
  - Other items included in the specification include manufacturer requirements such as warranty, references, or service requirements such as cleaning, inspection, and repair.



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- ii. The organization shall ensure the proper interface between ensemble elements, including, but not limited to, coat-to-hood and helmet, coat-to-pant, coat-to-glove, and pants-to-footwear. Any other specialty equipment being used shall also be considered to ensure the equipment does not interfere with the proper function and interface of the protective ensemble or ensemble elements.
- iii. The risk assessment and the determination of the selected PPE must be documented in a SWOT format for later reference and/or review.

#### **4. Field Evaluation**

- i. After evaluating the risk assessment, the Committee will contact manufacturers for participation in a field evaluation. The Committee will inform manufacturers of the performance requirements and any preferences in design or fabric composition.

Test participants will be selected based on:

- Willingness to participate
  - Objectivity
  - Level of operational activity
  - Position within the department
  - Age and gender
- ii. Participants will test each manufacturer's model under consideration and complete an evaluation form used to rate characteristics considered necessary by the Committee. The participants will fill out the forms at least twice during the test and once upon completion (see Appendix 1004 Turnout Wear Test Evaluation)
  - iii. The Committee will establish the duration of the field evaluation and will address any fit issues before the test begins. Upon conclusion, the Committee will analyze the results and provide a detailed report to the Prince George Fire/EMS Fire Chief.



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## 5. Specifications

The purchase specifications will indicate the Committee's choices for the following required NFPA 1971 ensemble element components:

- i. Garments
  - Outer shell material: fabric, weight, color
  - Thermal liner material
  - Moisture barrier material: substrate, film, or coating
  - Trim: configuration, material, color
  - Closure system
  - Wristlets: material, design
- ii. Hoods
  - Material
  - Face opening design
- iii. Gloves
  - Composite materials
  - Wristlet or gauntlet
  - Wristlet material
- iv. Helmets
  - Material
  - Color
  - Retention system
  - Trim color and configuration
  - Ear cover material and dimension
  - Eye protection
- v. Boots
  - Composite materials



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The specifications can also include other performance requirements or features such as:

- Design or style requirement
- Customizations such as pockets, areas of enhanced insulation, lumbar support systems, etc.
- Weight reduction
- Interface requirements and coat hem rise
- Custom size requirements
- Other requirements deemed essential by the Committee.

Other items that can be included in the specification include manufacturer requirements such as warranty, references, or service requirements such as cleaning, inspection, and repair.

Purchase specifications shall require that the ensemble or ensemble element(s) to be purchased shall comply with NFPA 1851, 2020 edition and the current edition of NFPA 1971.

## **XII. Receiving Turnout Gear**

- A.** Prince George Fire/EMS maintains ownership of all PPE/turnout gear provided to all members of the PGFEMS. Upon changing job status or leaving employment/Volunteer, members will return all PPE provided by PGFEMS. No member may use their PPE in the employment or volunteer of any other agency/employer. The only exception to this are members of company three (3) and their responsibility to adjoining county. For example, a member of the PGFEMS would violate policy if they were to use department-issued PPE while teaching a class on behalf of another employee or for use with another fire department or other employer without prior approval if training gear is not available.
- B.** Structural firefighting turnout coats and bunker pants must be sized and fitted per the manufacturer's turnout gear sizing instructions before receiving new turnout gear. Once the turnout gear is received, the PGFEMS Logistics Officer will inspect all new turnout gear before issuing it to the member and ensuring it was received in operable condition from the vendor. In addition, the Logistics Officer will complete an inspection form and input the information into the Inventory tracking system to begin its tracking in our system.
- C.** The Logistics Officer, designated by the Fire Chief of Prince George Fire/EMS, shall supply and ensure that the turnout gear properly fits each employee/member,



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according to NFPA standards, before issuance. If the turnout gear needs alterations to ensure proper fit, this shall be coordinated through the Logistics Officer by an approved vendor, and the turnout gear shall not be issued until alterations are made.

- D. At the time of issue, the Logistics officer will input the pertinent information and the receiving individual into the system. All issued turnout gear contains a serial number, and that number will be recorded on all turnout gear and is used to track issued items. If any current member receives new turnout gear and has an existing set, they must return the issued set to the PGFEMS Logistics Officer before receiving any additional gear unless the member has an additional set approved by the Fire Chief of Prince George County.
- E. When a member (Career or Volunteer) leaves the organization, it will be the individual's responsibility to return all issues gear and or equipment to their Station Chief or County Logistics Officer. An inspection should be performed with the member whenever possible in an effort to accurately document the gears condition. If individuals fail to follow proper procedure, they shall assume all financial responsibility for the items not returned. Companies are to return all gear from members that are no longer with the department or gear that is found out of compliance to the PGFEMS logistics department.

### **XIII. Inspection of Turnout Gear/PPE**

- A. Inspection of turnout gear is to determine personal protective clothing has soiling, contamination, or damage that may result in the equipment becoming unsafe for use. If turnout gear ensembles or ensemble elements are soiled or contaminated, they must be cleaned or decontaminated before further inspection, and when appropriate, universal precautions must be used.
- B. All inspections of turnout gear ensembles and ensemble elements will be completed utilizing the PGFEMS turnout gear Inspection Form found in Attachment 1002
- C. There are three (3) types of inspections of all ensembles and ensemble elements that are in-service, in storage, or inventoried that will take place within the PGFEMS Department
  - Routine/daily Inspection
  - Annual Inspection
  - Advanced Inspection



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## 1. Routine Inspection

- i. Routine inspection is the responsibility of PGFEMS personnel who have been issued personal protective clothing. Routine inspection must be performed after each use and after each exposure to an event that could result in damage.
- ii. All firefighting personnel shall receive training on the inspection of their protective ensembles. Each firefighter shall do a routine inspection
  - At the beginning of each tour of duty
  - After each use and/or cleaning of their protective clothing.
  - When it has been repaired
  - After entering an IDLH atmosphere
  - Any time a member believes the ensemble may be damaged.
- iii. During routine daily inspection, PGFEMS members will evaluate the following items:

Protective coats and pants should be inspected for:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Damaged or missing hardware and closures
  - Thermal damage
- Damaged or missing trim
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Correct assembly of shell, liner and Drag Rescue Device (DRD)
- Visible identification number

DRDs should be inspected for the following:

- Installation in coat
- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Cuts, tears, punctures, cracking or splitting



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- Thermal damage
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches

Hoods should be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Thermal damage
- Stretching or elongation of the face opening
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches

Helmets should be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage to the shell
  - Cracks, crazing, dents and abrasion
  - Thermal damage
- Physical damage to the earflaps
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Thermal damage
- Damaged or missing components of the suspension and retention systems
- Damage or missing components of the Face shield or goggles.
- Damaged or missing reflective trim
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Visible identification Tracking number

Gloves should be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Thermal damage
  - Inverted liner
- Shrinkage
- Loss of flexibility and/or loss of elasticity of the wristlet
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches





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Boots should be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Cuts, tears and punctures
  - Thermal damage
  - Exposed or deformed steel toe, steel midsole or shank
- Loss of water resistance
- Closure damage or not functioning
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches

- D.** Additionally, interface components should be inspected to ensure that they continue to provide the proper interface.
- E.** Members who suspect that a problem exists should inform their Officer in Charge. The Officer in Charge will complete the Inspection form and send it to the Logistics Officer to request an advanced inspection. Temporary loaner turnout gear will be provided to the member until the issue is resolved.

**Note:** Daily routine inspections will not require completing an inspection form unless issues are discovered.

## **2. Annual Inspection**

- i.** It shall be the policy of Prince George Fire/EMS to conduct an Annual Inspection of all turnout gear that is in use, assigned, newly purchased, or stored inventory. An Annual Inspection of Turnout gear will be performed in the month of January.
- ii.** All gear contained in inventory and in service will have an Annual Inspection performed. During routine inspections where issues are identified will also require an in-depth inspection as outlined in the Annual Inspection process.
- iii.** A complete liner inspection will be performed along with the Annual Inspection on all structural firefighting components to include: coat,



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trousers, footwear, gloves, helmets, and hood as illustrated in the current NFPA 1851, "Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting."

- iv. During the inspections, there will be numerous areas of emphasis which include, but are not limited to the following: tears, rips, cuts, discoloration, missing hardware, inoperable Velcro, or any other item that may affect the integrity of the gear. Regardless of the condition, a gear inventory/inspection form must be completed for all Prince George Fire/EMS members by Fire Officers, who will document all issues noted, if any, then submit through their chain of command to the Prince George Fire/EMS Logistics Officer.
- v. These forms and all the information will be uploaded into the current inventory tracking system. Once the gear is interred into the inventory tracking system, the gear inspection forms will be uploaded to the member's profile and remain attached to that member for the life of the gear or transferred when reassigned.
- vi. The Prince George Fire/EMS Department (PGFEMS) has designated personnel trained to provide Annual Inspections. The Logistics Officer will coordinate the Annual inspection in collaboration with the Station Chiefs or the Fire Chief.
- vii. All Prince George Fire/EMS Department members, who have issued turnout gear, will be notified through their respective Station Chiefs or Shift Commander, via email and Departmental Interoffice memo of the date, time, and location of the Annual Inspection. Members must submit all personal protective equipment issued or utilized by them for inspection. Members who cannot submit their turnout gear ensembles and ensemble elements by the advertised time and date must notify their Station Chief or Shift Commander and Logistics Officer in advance and request rescheduling.
- viii. Failure to complete an Annual Inspection by the announced end date will result in the PGFEMS member's temporary removal from duty or service until cleared by the PGFEMS Logistics Officer.



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- ix. The PGFEMS Logistics Officer or other approved personnel trained in the Annual Inspection process will record on departmentally approved inspection form and or may input the required information into the approved inventory tracking system. The following shall consist of but limited to the information needed for the inventory system:
- Name of member gear is assigned
  - Date(s) and findings of advanced inspections
  - Dates(s) and findings of advanced cleaning or decontamination
  - Reason for advanced cleaning or decontamination
  - Date(s) of basic repair(s) and description of repair(s)
  - Date(s) of advanced and moisture barrier repair(s), the contractor that performed repair(s), and description of the repair.
- x. In the performance of the Annual Inspection, the following shall occur:

Protective coats and pants must be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Damaged or missing hardware
  - Thermal damage
- Loss of moisture barrier integrity
  - Rips, tears, cuts or abrasions
  - Discoloration
  - Thermal damage
- Evaluation of system fit and coat/pants overlap
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Loss of material integrity
  - Discoloration
  - Change in texture
  - Material strength
  - Loss or shifting of liner material
- Loss of wristlet integrity
  - Loss of elasticity
  - Stretching



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- Runs, cuts or burn holes
- Damaged or missing trim
- Label legibility and attachment
- Hook and loop functionality
- Liner attachment systems
- Closure system functionality
- Accessories for compliance
- Correct assembly of shell, liner and Drag Rescue Device (DRD)

Protective coats and pants must have the following additional evaluations:

- Light evaluation of liners (all garments)
- Leakage evaluation (garments in service less than three years)

Protective coats and pants in service three years or more must have a complete liner inspection that requires separating the moisture barrier from the thermal liner and inspecting for:

- Physical damage to all layers (all sides)
  - Rips, tears, cuts and abrasions
  - Thermal damage
- Seams becoming un-sewn, missing or broken stitches and missing or loose seam tape
- Material physical integrity
  - UV or chemical damage
  - Changes in material texture
  - Loss of material strength
  - Loss or shifting of liner material
- Delaminating of film from substrate, flaking or powdering
- Label legibility
- Water barrier penetration evaluation (hydrostatic testing)

DRDs must be inspected for the following:

- Installation in coat
- Soiling
- Contamination



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- Physical damage
  - Cuts, tears, punctures, cracking or splitting
  - Thermal damage
  - Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches

Hoods must be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Thermal damage
- Shrinkage
- Loss of material elasticity or stretching out of shape
- Stretching or elongation of the face opening
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Label legibility

Helmets must be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage to the shell
  - Cracks, crazing, dents and abrasion
  - Thermal damage
  - Physical damage to the earflaps
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Thermal damage
- Damaged or missing components of the suspension and retention systems
- Functionality of the suspension and retention systems
- Damage or missing components of the face shield or goggles
- Functionality of the face shield or goggles
- Damage to the impact cap
- Damaged or missing reflective trim
- Accessories for compliance
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Label legibility



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Gloves must be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Rips, tears and cuts
  - Thermal damage
  - Inverted liner
- Shrinkage
- Loss of flexibility and/or loss of elasticity of the wristlet
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Label legibility

Boots must be inspected for the following:

- Soiling
- Contamination
- Physical damage
  - Cuts, tears and punctures
  - Thermal damage
  - Exposed or deformed steel toe, steel midsole or shank
- Loss of water resistance
- Closure damage or not functioning
- Excessive tread wear
- Condition of lining
  - Tears
  - Excessive wear
  - Separation from the outer layer
- Heel counter failure
- Accessories for compliance
- Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
- Label legibility

Interface components must be inspected for the following:



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- Soiling
  - Contamination
  - Physical damage
  - Loss or reduction in properties that allow the component to be effective as an interface
  - Seams becoming un-sewn and missing or broken stitches
  - Label legibility
- x. Annual Inspection will be conducted in the month of January or whenever routine Inspections indicate that a problem exists. An Annual Inspection or Advanced Inspection may also be initiated after an incident where exposure to excessive heat, severe contamination, or other extreme conditions could have compromised the personal protective clothing's protective performance.
- xii. If issues with turnout gear are discovered during a routine or Annual Inspection, the Station Chief, Shift Commander, or Logistics Officer deems the turnout gear ensembles or ensemble elements no longer meet the departmental safety standards, the Logistics officer will remove the gear from service. The turnout gear ensembles or ensemble elements will be evaluated to determine if it meets NFPA 1851 to use as non-structural firefighting training gear or retire the equipment per departmental policy.

### **3. Advanced Inspection**

- i. Advanced inspections of all issued protective ensemble elements shall be conducted whenever a routine or Annual inspection determines potential damage or concerns over the safety of the ensemble or ensemble elements are above that of the Routine Inspection or annual inspection. The ensemble shall be turned into the PGFEMS Logistics department as soon as possible so that the Logistics Department can contact the manufacturer of the element or contracted ISP for an Advanced inspection. All Advanced Inspection shall follow NFPA 1851 2020 edition Chapter Six (6) guidelines.



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#### **XIV. Turnout Gear/PPE Cleaning**

- A.** Studies have shown that toxic substances deposited on firefighters' protective clothing may, over time, build up within the ensemble or ensemble elements and eventually be absorbed through the skin as the firefighter perspires. These toxic substances are present at any fire, especially at the modern structure fire, in smoke, and other combustion products. Studies have identified this exposure medium as a likely cause of increased cancer rates in firefighters to reduce the risk of exposure to firefighting protective ensembles.
- B.** It shall be required that all turnout gear will be routinely cleaned after every fire where the firefighter has been contaminated with smoke, after exposure to body fluid or chemical contamination. Advanced cleaning of PPE shall be machine washed as per manufacturer's recommendation. This annual washing will clean the gear that is not thoroughly cleaned by routine washing and remove any particles in the PPE that are not visible. Protective clothing shall not be cleaned using chlorinated bleach or powder or liquid laundry detergent due to improper ph. values.
- C.** Per manufacturers' recommendations, protective clothing shall only be cleaned with a detergent approved for such cleaning.
- D.** Personnel cleaning contaminated clothing shall wear latex/non-latex gloves and eye protection. Any portion of turnout gear that is soiled or contaminated should not be brought into the home, washed in-home laundries, or washed in public laundries. Commercial dry cleaning should not be used to clean or decontaminate ensembles unless approved by the ensemble manufacturer.
- E.** Turnout gear ensembles that are known or suspected to be contaminated with body fluids should be evaluated on the incident scene under the direction of the Company Officer on scene by conducting a preliminary assessment of the extent of contamination and the need for the turnout gear ensemble to be isolated, tagged and bagged on the scene. Universal precautions should be observed at all times by members handling elements known or suspected to be contaminated with body fluids.
- F.** When contract cleaning or decontamination is determined or used, the contracted supplier shall demonstrate, to the PGFEMS satisfaction, that their procedures for cleaning and decontamination do not compromise the performance of the ensemble.





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## 1. Routine Cleaning Process

- i. The Prince George Fire/EMS Department member should examine the manufacturer's label and user information to clean and dry the ensemble. The following describes the routine cleaning and drying information generally required by turnout gear ensemble manufacturers. Where possible, the contamination levels should be evaluated, and cleaning should be initiated at the emergency scene.
- ii. Turnout gear ensembles should be isolated whenever possible to avoid cross-contamination.
- iii. Any dry debris should be brushed off using the stiff brush(s) explicitly designated for turnout gear cleaning. Other debris should be gently rinsed off with water. Heavy scrubbing or spraying with high-velocity water, such as a power washer, should not be used. Where necessary, turnout gear ensemble elements for routine cleaning should be cleaned in a utility sink located at the station following best practices:
  - Heavily soiled or spotted areas should be pretreated. Chlorine bleach, chlorinated solvents, active ingredient cleaning agents or solvents should not be used without the ensemble manufacturer's approval.
  - Water temperature for cleaning should not exceed 105 F degrees. Mild detergents with a pH range of not less than 6.0pH and not greater than 10.5 pH as indicated on the cleaning product Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or product container should be used.
  - ERA Active Stain-Fighter Formula Laundry Detergent meets the pH requirement. Protective gloves and eye/face splash protection should be worn. Elements should be thoroughly rinsed. Elements should be inspected and, where necessary, should be rewashed or submitted for advanced cleaning. The manufacturer should be consulted if stronger cleaning agents are required.
  - Elements should be air dried by placing the element(s) in an area with good ventilation. Elements should not be dried in direct sunlight.



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## Helmet

- If it is necessary to immerse the helmet completely, the impact cap should be separated from the helmet shell. Each component should be washed and dried separately before reassembly.
- Solvents should not be used to clean or decontaminate helmets and helmet components. The helmet manufacturer should be consulted if stronger cleaning agents are required.
- Helmets should not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action from tumbling or agitation.

## Gloves

- Glove elements should not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action from tumbling or agitation.

## Hoods

- Hood elements should be permitted to be washed and machine dried with garment liners.

## Footwear

- Footwear elements should not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action from tumbling or agitation.

## **2. Advanced Cleaning**

- i. Prince George Fire/EMS defines Advanced Cleaning at two (2) levels, Station Level Advanced cleaning and Contracted Advanced Cleaning. Contracted Advanced cleaning shall occur when station level cleaning is not appropriate and or requires services not available within PGFEMS. Such Contracted Advanced Cleaning shall be performed by a verified ISP and set up through PGFEMS Logistics.
- ii. Station Level Advanced cleaning of ensemble elements should be completed per the manufacturer's guidelines. If the coat element has a



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Drag Rescue Device or Personal Safety System and is removable, the Device/System should be removed before the turnout coat is laundered.

- iii. If the Drag Rescue Device or Personal Safety System requires cleaning, it should be placed in a separate mesh bag for washing and drying. Where turnout gear shells and liners of protective garment elements are separable, those items should be cleaned and decontaminated only with like items. Detachable liner systems should be turned inside out, so the moisture barrier is inside for machine washing. The following should be used for machine washing:
- The washing machine should not be overloaded.
  - Heavily soiled or spotted areas should be pretreated. Chlorine bleach, chlorinated solvents, active ingredient cleaning agents, or solvents should not be used without the ensemble manufacturer's approval.
  - All closures should be fastened, including pocket closures, hooks, loops, snaps, and zippers.
  - Water temperature for cleaning should not exceed 105 F degrees.
  - Mild detergents with a pH range of not less than 6.0pH and not greater than 10.5 pH as indicated on the cleaning product Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or product container should be used. ERA Active Stain-Fighter Formula laundry detergent meets this requirement
  - The washing machine manufacturer's instructions should be followed for proper setting or program selection for the specific element being washed.
  - The element should be inspected and rewashed if necessary.
  - The drying of turnout gear/PPE will be based on the manufacturer's recommendations. Two acceptable drying methods are in the hose dryer (No Heat), commercial-made turnout gear dryers, or hanging in the bay using a floor fan (if available) in a place where there is no possibility of UV exposure. Gloves and hoods may be dried in a dryer using a low-temperature setting. Personal laundry should not be cleaned in the extractor due to possible cross-contamination.
  - Once the gear is washed, dried, and inspected, documentation shall be forwarded to the PGFEMS Logistics by the appropriate company officer.



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- iv. When contract cleaning or decontamination is determined or used, the contracted supplier shall demonstrate, to the PGFEMS satisfaction, that their procedures for cleaning and decontamination do not compromise the performance of the ensemble.

## **XV. Haz-Mat Exposure**

- A. Protective clothing contaminated with hazardous material (other than the products of combustion associated with a typical structure or a wildland fire and fuel or motor oils) is subject to preliminary exposure reduction and shall not be cleaned by firefighters, and will require specialized analysis and cleaning if appropriate.
- B. Preliminary Exposure Reduction Procedures for Hazardous Material Exposure. Turnout gear ensembles contaminated with CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) terrorism agents should be immediately retired after the confirmed exposure and should not be subjected to cleaning or decontamination.
- C. Turnout gear ensembles that are known or suspected to be contaminated with hazardous material should be evaluated by the wearer under the direction of the Company Officer on scene by conducting a preliminary assessment of the extent of contamination and the need for the turnout gear ensemble to be isolated, tagged and bagged on the scene. The contaminated ensemble should be removed from service and sent to the PGFEMS Logistics department until the contaminant or suspected contaminant is identified, and the ensemble elements can receive specialized cleaning as necessary to remove the specific contaminant(s).
- D. As soon as possible when the contaminant and its source have been identified, the PGFEMS Logistics Department should consult the supplier of the contaminant and the manufacturer of the ensemble for an appropriate decontamination agent and process.
- E. The Incident command shall set up a decontamination area and shall carry out preliminary exposure reduction immediately after exiting the emergency scene at any incident where their protective ensemble or ensemble elements could have become soiled or contaminated.
- F. Upon exiting the emergency scene, the member shall remain on self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) air. If returning to the emergency scene after an air cylinder



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change, any dry debris shall be brushed off the helmet, facepiece, and SCBA before changing out the cylinder.

- G. Members completing their decontamination on the scene, dry or wet mitigation techniques shall be conducted before removing any ensemble or ensemble elements.
- H. The dry mitigation techniques shall be performed by brushing debris from the exterior of ensembles and ensemble elements with a soft bristle brush before removal.
- I. The wet mitigation techniques shall be performed by gently rinsing the exterior of ensembles and ensemble elements using low-pressure and low-volume flow water. A mild detergent shall be permitted to aid in the wet mitigation technique, followed by gentle rinsing.
- J. Heavy scrubbing or spraying with high-velocity water jets such as a power washer shall not be used.
- K. If used in combination, dry mitigation shall precede wet mitigation. Following dry or wet mitigation, ensemble or ensemble elements shall be isolated and bagged.
- L. Where possible, ensemble or ensemble elements, even when bagged, shall not be transported in the passenger areas of apparatus or personal vehicles.

**1. Additional Requirements for Preliminary Exposure Reduction of Hood Interface Components.**

- i. Following each structural fire or emergency service use, hood interface components shall be subjected to preliminary exposure reduction and advanced cleaning as specified in Advanced Cleaning.
- ii. Additional Requirements for Preliminary Exposure Reduction of Eye and Face Protection Components. After each use, eye and face protection components provided as part of the helmet or as separate devices shall be subjected to preliminary exposure reduction and wiped off and cleaned.
- iii. During preliminary exposure reduction, the use of a brush or any other abrasive cleaning device on the radiant reflective outer shell and other



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components or proximity firefighting protective ensembles and elements shall not be permitted

- iv. Ensembles and ensemble elements that were contaminated during a hazardous materials incident and cannot be cleaned shall be disposed of as hazardous waste in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.
- v. All members shall ensure that their gear is clean before interaction with members of the public, especially children, to avoid potential of exposure.

## **XVI. Repair of Ensemble Elements**

- A. All turnout gear ensemble and ensemble element repairs will comply with Chapter eight (8) of the NFPA 1851 2020 edition.
- B. All ensemble repairs and alterations shall be performed by the original manufacturer or a verified contracted ISP and shall be done in a manner and using like materials and components compliant with NFPA 1971.
- C. Due to the different construction methods, the ensemble or ensemble element manufacturer shall be contacted if PGFEMS or verified ISP is unsure of whether a repair can be accomplished without adversely affecting the integrity of the ensemble or ensemble element.
- D. Replacement interface components shall be installed in a manner consistent with the ensemble or ensemble element manufacturer's method of construction. Where repairs of ensemble elements include replacing shells, liners, or components on which the product labels are present, the exact product label shall be used, if practical.
- E. If impractical to retain the ensemble element's product label or the product label is damaged, a new product label shall be prepared with the identical product information as provided on the original product label using identical materials and printing that are compliant with NFPA 1971 as per NFPA 1851, including the words "REPLACEMENT LABEL" and the date of repair for any ensemble element where the product label has been replaced shall be permitted.



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## **XVII. Loaner Turnout Gear/PPE**

- A.** When a member's set of gear is determined that it is no longer safe for use or no longer serviceable, loaner gear can be secured from PGFEMS Logistics. Loaner gear is also provided for training purposes through logistics.
- B.** After-hours access to loaner gear is to be coordinated through an on-duty Shift Commander.
- C.** Loaner gear shall be obtained through Uniform Reissue available online or in hardcopy forms located with each Station Chief, Shift Commander, or Logistics Officer uniform and gear storage area.
- D.** Loaner gear serial numbers shall be listed within the Uniform Reissue for each garment within the "other" section. This is necessary for accountability and liability.
- E.** If the appropriately sized gear is not available in the logistics inventory for structural firefighting, the respected Chief or Shift Commander will be notified, and all efforts will be made to expedite gear.
- F.** Members that instruct for the Training and Education Division will be issued a set of turnout gear for the day/time needed for conducting training. The turnout gear will be returned to the Logistics Officer or Shift Commander no later than five (5) days from the end of the training program.
- G.** Once a member's original gear has been returned to service, their loaner gear shall be cleaned and returned to PGFEMS logistics inventory.

Note: Loaner pant lengths may be 1-inch larger than a member fitted PPE size

- Loaner pant waist size can be 3-4 inches larger.
- Loaner coats may be 1-inch larger in all their fitted sizing areas.
- Loaner gear may not be sized any less than their fitted PPE size.



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## **XVIII. Storage of Turnout Gear Ensembles**

- A. Storage of turnout gear is crucial to its service life, maintaining its performance, and to reducing potential health risks.
- i. Turnout gear ensembles and ensemble elements must be stored in clean, dry and well ventilated areas.
  - ii. Turnout gear ensembles and ensemble elements must not be exposed to extended periods of direct sunlight or fluorescent light when not worn.
  - iii. Turnout gear ensembles and ensemble elements will be stored in the turnout gear racks when not in use.
  - iv. Store away from contaminants
  - v. Do not store in an airtight container.
  - vi. Never store in extreme temperatures
  - vii. Store turnout gear in a gear bag to help prevent damage when transporting from station to station.
  - viii. Clean and dry in a well-ventilated area before storing
  - ix. Turnout gear shall be placed in the issued gear bag once it is clean and dry.
- B. No turnout gear shall be worn or placed in the living areas of the fire station. Living areas shall be defined as a dayroom, kitchen, offices, bunkroom, etc. This is necessary to prevent unnecessary exposure of our members to harmful contaminants.
- C. Remember to avoid taking any gear home because of possible off-gassing of contaminants. All gear should be left in personnel lockers at your assigned station when not in use. Make every attempt not to take gear home; if you have to store gear at your residence, all gear must be stored in a secure and locked place gear will never be stored in the back of truck beds, vehicle trunks, or out in the open. Taking your gear home should be a last resort.
- D. Since PPE has a defined shelf life and constitutes a tremendous expense, all turnout gear, and associated PPE will be stored within the PGFEMS logistics inventory room and kept at a minimum level.





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## **XIX. Retirement of PPE**

A. Prince George Fire/EMS has specific criteria for the permanent removal of personal protective clothing from operational use.

B. Criteria for Retirement

The department shall retire PPE ensembles and elements that:

- i. Contain physical damage that cannot be repaired or cannot be economically repaired.
- ii. Contain physical damage from exposure to excessive heat beyond the conditions that personal protective clothing was designed to withstand.
- iii. Contaminated to the extent that it cannot be safely or economically decontaminated
- iv. A significant change in department specification
- v. Does not meet past or current NFPA standards
- vi. Mandatory retirement due to age of personal protective clothing such as Ten (10) years from the date of manufacture

C. Personal protective clothing that is removed from service because it is no longer suitable for primary personal protection will be destroyed as per County policy or marked and allocated to non-live fire training, dependent on the reason for retirement.

D. Personal protective clothing that has been retired for reasons other than damage or contamination, and remains in serviceable condition, may be tagged for training by permanently marked "for training use only" and maintained in the PGEMS logistics department and available to all members through the "Loaner Program."

E. If turnout gear is deemed unserviceable, then the gear shall be retired. The user shall requisition replacement turnout gear through the chain of command.



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## **XX. Special Incident Procedure**

- A. Any PPE involved in a severe injury or fatality shall be seized immediately by the Station Chief, Shift Commander, or Acting Officer in Charge and placed into custody, and remain the property of Prince George Fire/EMS until it is determined the evidence is no longer needed.
- B. Prince George Fire/EMS will hold the turnout gear evidence accordingly:
- i. Provisions shall be made for the immediate removal from service and preservation of all PPE utilized by the injured or deceased firefighter.
  - ii. Custody shall be maintained with the PGPD at a secure location with controlled and documented access.
  - iii. The gear shall be non-destructively tagged and stored in paper or cardboard containers to prevent further degradation or damage. Plastic or airtight containers shall not be used.
  - iv. Outside experts shall examine determine the condition thereof.
  - v. Photographs of the gear damage and how the gear was worn should be obtained and placed in the incident report.
- C. In conjunction with the Fire Chief of the Prince George Fire/EMS office, Prince George County Human Resources will review all injuries/accidents resulting from failure of or failure to use protective equipment. All records related to the gear shall be forwarded to the Fire Chief within 3-hours of the incident.