

<b>TITLE</b> OPERATIONS MANUAL	<b>STANDARD</b> <b>INSTRUCTION</b> 10		<b>DEPARTMENT</b> F I R E-RESCUE
<b>SUBJECT:</b> FIRE SUPPRESSION POST INCIDENT DECONTAMINATION	<b>SECTION</b> 16A	<b>PAGE</b> 1 of 4	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b> 24 September 2020

**I. PURPOSE**

This policy outlines personal decontamination and gross field decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE), tools, equipment, and apparatus.

**II. SCOPE**

This policy shall apply to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel, including lifeguards assigned to Boating Safety Unit (BSU) Operations.

**III. AUTHORITY**

The fire chief authorizes the information in this policy.

**IV. POLICY**

This policy outlines field decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE), tools, skin, and clothing to remove both visible and invisible byproducts of combustion that result from firefighting operations whether in training or emergency operations. It is important for all personnel to understand the critical importance of personal decontamination as soon as practical after firefighting as doing so greatly reduces exposure to known carcinogens and may lessen the chance of developing cancer and/or other diseases.

- A. After all firefighting operations, personnel should take the time to engage in both gross and personal decontamination.
- B. To prevent fire apparatus contamination, crews are to roll up all windows upon arrival at a working incident.
- C. Clean hands and face with personal decontamination wipes prior to eating or drinking at the scene of a fire.
- D. Keep neck and hood clean.
  - 1. Wearing a clean hood and maintaining a clean neck greatly reduces exposure to carcinogens.
  - 2. Dirty hoods should not be worn around the neck when not necessary, for example when staged outside a fire waiting for an assignment.
  - 3. When staged outside a fire or when a hood becomes unnecessary as dictated by conditions and/or at the discretion of the company officer, firefighters should remove their hoods and stow until needed.
  - 4. Whenever a dirty hood is removed, personnel should clean their necks with a personal decontamination wipe. Engineers can assist this process by making personal decontamination wipes readily available (found in the hood exchange bag).

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5. At fires that are especially 'dirty' (i.e., black acrid smoke) firefighters are encouraged to swap dirty hoods for clean hoods during the incident.
  6. To remove barriers to maintaining a clean hood, firefighters are to always carry their second clean hood on the apparatus.
  7. To ensure that clean hoods are available, each front-line apparatus has a hood exchange bag with four additional hoods and 25 individually packaged personal decontamination wipes.
    - a. The hood exchange bag is to be kept inside the cab of the apparatus and is sealed with a break-away zip-tie.
    - b. When hoods from the hood exchange bag are used, personnel will launder their two personally issued hoods and the hoods from the hood exchange bag will be returned to their respective battalion chief for delivery to Logistics.
      - 1) Dirty hoods will be placed in a 6 ml bag plastic bag (found in the post-fire gross decontamination kit) and zip-tied with a contaminated PPE tag prior to return to Logistics.
    - c. Used hoods are to be delivered to the Logistics Division for professional cleaning and restocking.
    - d. For proper hood laundering refer to Operations Manual Personal Protective Equipment Storage and Maintenance Policy.
- E. Post-Fire Gross Decontamination (PFGD)
1. PFGD kits are on all frontline engines, trucks, squads, urban search and rescue (USAR) units and Lifeguard Boating Safety Units (BSU).
    - a. Kits provide firefighters with all the necessary items to engage in PFGD
    - b. Decontamination instructions are located on the side of the kit
    - c. Resupply through Public Safety Tracking System (PSTrax) or the department approved online tracking system.
  2. Post-Fire Decontamination Using Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Wet Method
    - a. OSHA approved wet method decontamination can remove up to 85% of contaminants.
    - b. Utilize PFGD kit to create a diluted solution with department supplied cleaner and water, per kit instructions.
    - c. Use a low-pressure stream of water to rinse thoroughly, then use the diluted cleaner and water solution and a soft brush to remove as much visible contaminants as possible. Perform a final rinse to remove remaining contaminants and cleaner.
    - d. After gross decontamination, utilize personal decontamination wipes

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- e. Use as many wipes as necessary to effectively clean visible contaminants from skin, paying special attention to hands, face, neck, armpits and groin.
  3. Decontaminate tools and equipment using a low-pressure stream of water, diluted department supplied cleaner and water solution, and a soft brush to remove all gross contaminants.
  4. Wear medical aid gloves when engaged in gross decontamination and when handling dirty PPE.
  5. To avoid contaminating apparatus, personnel are to carry an extra clean uniform to change into after decontamination and prior to getting into the apparatus.
    - a. Uniform may be either class B, C or D.
  6. Environmental and/or other unforeseen conditions may make it impractical to engage in PFGD. However, timely decontamination greatly reduces toxic load exposure which reduces cancer risk.
- F. Securing Contaminated PPE
  1. Use 6 ml trash bags from the PFGD kit to bag the contaminated PPE
  2. Seal with a zip tie and utilize the 'Contaminated PPE' tag
  3. Write name, rank, and permanent station and division assignment on 'Contaminated PPE' tag
  4. Follow gross decontamination procedures for cleaning PPE prior to bagging
  5. Store bagged PPE out of the apparatus cab to prevent off-gassing exposure
  6. Clean PPE in station washing machines following the PPE washing procedures
- G. Personal Decontamination
  1. Personal decontamination involves showering as soon as possible after the incident.
  2. Clean your entire body, head to toe, with soap and warm (not hot) water.
  3. Crews are to coordinate with the incident commander/assigned battalion chief to remain out of service for personal decontamination and to ready their second set of PPE.
  4. Special consideration and priority should be given to those crews with the heaviest contamination, for example, interior attack crews and crews assigned to overhaul.

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H. Clean Apparatus

1. After personal decontamination has been completed, both the interior and exterior of the apparatus is to be cleaned using department supplied cleaner.
  - a. The inside of the apparatus is to be vacuumed thoroughly while wearing an N-95 or HEPA-filter mask.
  - b. Logistics currently has commercial grade upholstery cleaners. Contact the department facilities maintenance officer to procure.
  - c. All surfaces should be wiped down with soap and water or with department supplied cleaner.
  - d. DO NOT 'blow out' the inside of the apparatus or exterior compartments with forced air.
  - e. The exterior of the apparatus is to be thoroughly washed to remove all soot and ash.
5. All tools and equipment should be cleaned with department supplied cleaner to remove as much contamination as possible.
6. Helmets, gloves and boots are to be thoroughly cleaned in station deep sinks using department supplied cleaner.
7. Medical aid gloves are always worn during apparatus, tool, equipment, helmet, glove and boot decontamination
8. Review Post Fire Gross Decontamination Video for procedures at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLbYr3SVavk>