

TITLE O P E R A T I O N S M A N U A L	STANDARD INSTRUCTION 01		DEPARTMENT F I R E - R E S C U E
SUBJECT: FIRE SUPPRESSION: POST INCIDENT DECONTAMINATION	SECTION 19	PAGE 1 of 2	EFFECTIVE DATE 13 June 2019

I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines gross field decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE) and personnel to remove soot and particulates.

II. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all sworn San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) personnel, excluding lifeguards.

III. AUTHORITY

The fire chief authorizes the information in this policy.

IV. POLICY

1. 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 responses. 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 any other disease process.
2. After all firefighting operations, personnel should take the time to engage in both gross and personal decontamination. General principles of gross and personal decontamination include:
 - a. Clean hands and face with personal decontamination wipe(s) prior to eating or drinking at the scene of a fire.
 - b. 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 unnecessary (for example when staged outside a fire waiting for the “next assignment”). When staged outside a fire or when a hood becomes unnecessary as dictated by conditions and/or the discretion of the company officer, firefighters should remove their hood and stow it in a pocket until needed.
 3. Whenever a dirty hood is removed, personnel should reflexively clean their necks with a personal decontamination wipe. Engineers can assist in this process by making personal decontamination wipes readily available to firefighters.
 4. At fires that are especially “dirty” (i.e., black acrid smoke) firefighters are encouraged to swap their hoods out during the incident.
 5. To remove barriers to maintaining a clean hood, firefighters are to carry their second clean Nomex hood on the apparatus always.

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6. To ensure that clean hoods are available, each front-line apparatus has a hood bag with four additional hoods and 25 individually packaged skin wipes. The hood bag is to be kept inside the cab of the apparatus and is sealed with a break-away zip-tie.
 7. When hoods from the hood bag are used, personnel will launder their two personally issued hoods and the hoods from the hood bag will be returned to their respective battalion chief. Used hoods are to be delivered to the Logistics Division for professional cleaning and restocking. For proper hood laundering refer to Operations Manual Policy PPE Storage and Maintenance.
- c. After firefighting operations, engage in gross decontamination of PPE and tools using a low-pressure stream of water diluted PPE cleaning solution and soft brush to remove gross contaminants. Wear medical aid gloves when engaged in gross decontamination and/or handling of dirty PPE and/or tools to minimize exposure.
 - d. After gross decontamination, remove PPE and utilize personal decontamination wipes to remove toxins from the skin. Use as many wipes as necessary to effectively clean visible contaminants from skin, paying special attention to: hands, face, neck, armpit and groin
 1. Skin wipes can be resupplied from Logistics Equipment Center or any SDFD battalion chief apparatus. Questions related to the use of skin wipes or the Nomex hood replacement can be directed to the Health and Safety Officer.
 - e. Avoid cross-contaminating apparatus. When returning to quarters, store dirty PPE remote from the cab. Remember to carry an extra uniform, shirts, shorts etc. to change into for this purpose.
 - f. Environmental and/or other unforeseen conditions may make it impractical on occasion to engage in gross and personal decontamination. However, it is important to remember that reducing the toxic load firefighters are exposed to by engaging in timely decontamination after firefighting is critically important in reducing the risk of cancer and should be considered a high priority.
 - g. Shower promptly upon return to quarters.