A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to establish procedures and regulations for the issue and use of personnel protective clothing and equipment (PPE).

B. POLICY

Issued protective clothing and equipment are specifically designed for the protection of department personnel from bodily injury and the effects of extreme heat and cold. Compliance with this established procedure, along with good judgment and common sense is imperative for the prevention of injuries.

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES

The proper utilization of protective equipment is vital to the safety of personnel and is mandatory. The Fire Department is committed to providing quality protective equipment.

1. The Incident Commander shall be directly responsible for the safety of personnel on the emergency scene. Therefore, the Incident Commander shall insist that personnel function to maximize safety by complying with this directive, and expect all personnel to accept individual responsibility for proper use of protective clothing and equipment. The Incident Commander shall serve as the Safety Officer until he or she assigns the responsibility to another officer on scene.

2. All Officers and supervisors shall ensure that their subordinates wear proper protective clothing when required.

3. All personnel shall keep issued protective clothing and equipment readily available for immediate use and with their person at all times while on duty. All issued protective clothing and equipment shall be kept clean and serviceable at all times.

D. DEFINITIONS

1. Fire personal protective equipment shall be NFPA compliant and unaltered from the manufacture. Fire PPE is defined as:
   - Helmet with liner and chinstrap
   - Turnout Coat with liners intact
   - Turnout Pants with liners intact
   - Gloves as issued
   - Hood

SOP # 104.04
• Steel toe/shank boots as issued
• Safety Glasses
• SCBA
• Traffic Vest
• Accountability Tags

2. EMS personal protective equipment shall be defined as
• Non-latex gloves
• Safety glasses and/or face shields with eye protection
• N95-respirator
• Isolation gowns
• Other forms of Body Substance Isolation
• Traffic Vest
• Accountability Tags

PPE: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. The use of personal protective equipment will be MANDATORY AS A CONDITION OF EMPLOYMENT/MEMBERSHIP when specified by the Department for hazard protection.
   a. Supervisors will be held accountable for allowing personnel to work without prescribed equipment.
   b. The Risk Management Office’s review of injuries will emphasize accidents resulting from failure to use protective equipment.
2. Fire-EMS Chief shall approve ALL PPE issued and used in Caroline County.
3. Regulation personal protective equipment shall consist of a helmet, turnout coat, and turnout pants with approved boots, gloves, hood, and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA).
4. Logistics Division shall ensure that PPE properly fits each employee/member, according to NFPA standards, before issuance. If PPE needs alteration to ensure proper fit, this shall be coordinated through Logistics by an approved vendor, and the PPE shall not be issued until alterations are made.
5. High visibility vests are required when personnel are engaged in non-firefighting operations on a roadway.
6. SCBA shall be worn at all times while engaged in any operation in an atmosphere that is imminently dangerous to life or health (IDLH), SCBA shall continue to be worn on all incidents until such time as the Incident Commander has determined:
   a. That there are no hazardous materials or toxic products of combustion present,
   b. Personnel are not operating in an oxygen deficient atmosphere.
7. Only protective clothing and equipment issued or approved by the CCFR may be used by personnel on any fire/rescue incident.
8. Protective clothing and equipment will be in compliance with current editions of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standards (OSHA).
9. With the approval or concurrence of the Incident Commander, officers-in-charge (OIC) on emergency incidents not involving interior structural firefighting, may determine the appropriate level of protective clothing to be worn. The safety of fire/rescue personnel shall be the prime consideration for making this determination.
10. Full PPE (helmet, turnout coat, gloves [firefighting, or as listed below], turnout pants, and boots) shall be worn by all members while engaged in automobile extrication activities.
11. Full PPE ensemble, including SCBA, shall be worn by all members during automobile fires, and on other exterior fire incidents as determined by the Incident Commander.

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12. The appropriate level of protection shall apply to all members operating on the incident, regardless of company, bureau, assignment, or rank.

13. Apparatus operators are not required to wear their Personal Protective Equipment while driving. However, full PPE ensemble must be worn when involved in operations away from the vehicle. This will include SCBA when operating in or near an IDLH atmosphere.

14. NFPA and American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved eyewear shall be issued to all personnel as part of the standard issue helmet. Additionally, such eyewear may be obtained on an as-needed basis to replace the flip down face shield on previously issued helmets.
   a. The goggles may be removed from the helmet and carried in a pocket of the turnout gear until such time as they are needed.
   b. Eye protection shall be required during any activity which may result in falling or flying debris.
   c. The SCBA face-piece with the regulator attached is considered full eye protection.
   d. Members may use safety glasses during auto extrications and other emergencies deemed appropriate by the Incident Commander. However, if SCBA is not required, the goggles/approved eyewear must be worn.

E. WEARING OF PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

1. Responding to Emergencies
   a. All Fire protective clothing with the exception of Helmets and SCBA masks shall be worn on all emergency responses involving fire, motor vehicle accidents, or other hazardous scenes.
      • All personnel shall don proper protective clothing and equipment prior to the departure of the responding apparatus
      • Drivers are not required to wear protective clothing / equipment that hinders movement or visibility while driving.
      • Personnel assigned to Medic Units shall don PPE when they arrive on scene as appropriate

2. Operating at the Scene of an Emergency
   a. The following PPE shall be worn by all department personnel when arriving and operating at an emergency incident involving any hazardous atmosphere at the discretion of the Incident Commander.
      SCBA breathing apparatus shall be worn on all fire scenes or when the atmosphere may be hazardous. Breathing apparatus must be worn with Carbon Monoxide levels greater than 25 PPM and Oxygen Levels less than 19.5% as indicated by the use of atmospheric monitors.
      Note: The decision to wear SCBA on woods / brush fires shall be made by the Incident Commander.
   b. After all hazards have been controlled (or determined to be nonexistent) on motor vehicle accident scenes and other roadway responses, full protective clothing and equipment can be downgraded to the Traffic Safety Vest.
c. The Incident Commander may determine that personnel may remove certain items of protective clothing. In all situations, safety considerations are paramount, and the comfort and convenience of personnel is secondary.

d. Appropriate body substance isolation procedures (i.e. nitrile gloves, fluid shield masks for eye and airway protection) shall be used by personnel functioning on medical / trauma scenes.

e. Apparatus operators, command staff, and support personnel shall wear protective clothing as dictated by the hazards of their operating areas. Personnel exposed to vehicular traffic on streets and highways shall wear the protective clothing that offers maximum visibility to drivers to include Traffic Safety Vests.

3. Non-Emergency Vehicle Operations and Functions

a. Personnel shall wear helmet, ear protection and eye protection when riding in apparatus with open cabs.

b. All personnel shall wear safety belts at all times.

4. Training

An Officer or the Training Officer may determine the conditions that require protective clothing and/or equipment to be worn by personnel participating in training or drills. Decisions regarding protective clothing worn during training shall reflect and preserve the intent of this directive.

F. TURNOUT GEAR ISSUE

Each member functioning as a recruit firefighter or higher shall receive and maintain a complete set of turnout gear. This issue shall consist of the following:
- Helmet, with eye protection, fire retardant liner and chin strap
- Turnout coat
- Turnout pants
- Suspenders
- Bunker boots
- Structural firefighting gloves
- Work gloves
- Fire retardant hood
- Scott SCBA mask shall only be issued to members that are:
  - Must be fit testing
  - Must be Firefighter I certified or enrolled in a Firefighter I course
  - Physically and mentally able to wear an SCBA and perform interior firefighting operations.

G. CARE, MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION OF PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

1. Annually, gear must be thoroughly cleaned and maintained per NFPA 1851. An appointment must be placed with Logistics to have gear cleaned off-site. Due to the time needed to have gear cleaned and returned, Logistics should be given sufficient time to schedule gear maintenance during SOP # 104.04
scheduled work breaks.

2. Gear will be inspected semi-annually. Any maintenance deemed necessary will be approved and coordinated by Logistics.

3. Periodic exterior cleaning of gear may take place as necessary in the fire stations. This should be done with mild soapy water and a soft-bristled brush.

4. Periodic cleaning of full gear (interior liner and exterior shell, separated) must be done in a commercial grade front load washer using approved gear detergent. Gear will be dried at the station disassembled. This means that liners must be removed in order for proper dying to occur.

5. In cases of gross contamination, immediate decontamination should begin on scene. Before contaminated gear is to return to service, it shall be thoroughly cleaned and inspected.

6. Under no circumstances will the gear be taken home to be washed.

7. Any damage to PPE items throughout the year shall be reported to the Vol. District Chief or Career Lt. and then a request for repair/replacement shall be submitted to Logistics.

8. Keeping the turnout coat and pants clean increases the life expectancy and ensures the desired flame resistance. Abrasive flammable dirt and contaminants detract from the personal protective equipment designed performance standard.

9. All gear should be cleaned on an annual basis, or when necessary, such as after exposure to hazardous materials, blood borne pathogens, or petroleum products. Gear shall only be cleaned or repaired by the Department’s certified vendor. Career supervisors and Volunteer Chief Officers will be responsible to inspect the PPE of all employees/members under their command on a semi-annual basis.

H. PERSONNALLY OWNED PPE

Personnel interested in purchasing, and or utilizing their own PPE must have each item inspected and approved by a Fire-EMS Chief prior to use. All equipment must meet applicable NFPA standards. The individual is responsible for any costs associated with damages of personally owned equipment.

I. HELMETS

1. GENERAL
   a. Firefighters' helmet shall have helmet shields on the front
   b. Officers' helmets will have helmet shields on the fronts denoting the individual's rank.
   c. Flashlights and holders specifically designed for attachment to the face shield bracket will be permitted.
   d. Use of helmet mounted video or still camera is prohibited.
   e. Rubber bands to hold flashlights and chocks shall be prohibited.
   f. Specialty Team helmets will be marked as approved by the Fire-EMS Chief.
   g. All helmets must meet NFPA standards and specifications for safety and be maintained, etc. (proper reflective decals).
2. COLORS
   a. The following helmet colors will be utilized by County personnel:

   i. **Battalion Chiefs & Above**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification – White with White Shield – Chief Officers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fire-EMS Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Deputy Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>• District Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Assistant District Chief</td>
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<td>• Battalion Chief</td>
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   ii. **Lieutenants & Captains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification – Red with White Shield</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Fire Captains</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fire Lieutenants</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fire Sergeants</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

   iii. **Firefighter**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification – Black with Black Shield</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Firefighters (FFI or higher certification)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Firefighter / Medics (FFI or higher certification)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Firefighter / EMTs (FFI or higher certification)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

   iv. **Non Entry Firefighter / Uncertified**

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<th>Identification – Orange with Black Shield</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Any non-certified personnel (including driver only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personnel less than 18 years old (regardless of certification)</td>
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</table>
v.  EMS Only

Identification – Blue with Black Shield
- EMS Personnel (EMT-Basic or higher certification)
- EMS Officers (Helmet includes rank crescent)

3. Shields
   a. Helmet shields will be on printed reflective labels.
   b. Volunteer companies may purchase their own reflective shield labels with the approval of the Fire Chief.
   c. Leather shield fronts may be worn, and may include the member’s ID#, rank, and/or Company number.
      i. However, these optional shield fronts will be purchased at the member’s expense, and will maintain a presentable and professional appearance at all times.

Shield Illustrations:

i. Lieutenants and Above

   White shield
   White stitching
   Red Background
   White Lettering
   Center Passport Station # Identification and or Bugle Rank Insignia

ii. Firefighter Shield

   Black shield
   White stitching
   Red Background
   White Lettering
   Center Passport Station # White Identification
4. Helmet Apparatus Identification Panels (HIP):
   a. HIP’s provides for rapid and accurate visual identification of company officers and crews operating on the emergency scene. Magnetic Panels will be placed on both side of the helmet for easy identification.
   b. HIP’s will be color coordinated according by rank or apparatus position. The panels will be made of reflective material and marked according to apparatus type and number. The panels will be designed and worn in the vertical position only for maximum ability to see the panel from a distance.
   c. HIP’s are assigned to the riding position on every apparatus. Velcro to the area near the seating position for easy access while seat belted in the apparatus during responses. Spare HIP’s will be stored on the apparatus as needed. A set of HIP’s consists of two (2) panels (one for each side). HIP’s are to remain on the apparatus when not in use. Do not leave HIP’s on helmets in the station.

5. Accountability Tags
   a. All personnel will be issued four (4) accountability tags. They will be plastic tags(1/2”x2”) with Velcro backs
   b. All name tags will be attached to the inside of the helmets skull cap with Velcro for easy access and nametag protection.

J. TURNOUT COATS AND PANTS

Structural firefighting coats and pants will be issued to all certified fire personnel. Coats shall comply with standards as outlined in NFPA 1971, Protective Ensemble for Structural Fire Fighting. Coats and pants may be black, yellow, or tan in color.

Coats shall display the name of the Department across the back of the coat (shoulder area). The name of the firefighter (first initial and last name) shall appear on a removal panel at the bottom rear of the coat. Coats with earlier variations of agency and provider names will remain in service until the end of the garment life. Station patches are not permitted unless they conform to the requirements of NFPA 1971, Protective Ensemble for Structural Fire Fighting.

Pants shall be issued with approved suspenders.

Names may be written in permanent black magic marker on the inside of the storm flap. Names are not to be written on the outside of the coat or pants

Alterations and/or additions will conform to current department specifications for turnout clothing and will be sewn on by the department's designated repair facility.
K. Wildland Coats / Pants

Wildland firefighting coats and pants shall be provide in various sizes to fire stations and placed on brush apparatus. Wildland coats and pants shall be constructed of Nomex fabric and comply with NFPA wildland gear standards as outlined in NFPA 1977: Standard on Protective Clothing and Equipment for Wildland Fire Fighting (2011 ed).

Wildland Illustrations:
L.  FIREFIGHTING “BUNKER” BOOTS

Structural firefighting boots will be provided to call certified fire personal. Boots shall comply with NFPA and OSHA standards. Boots may be constructed of leather or rubber shells with steel toes and shanks.

Firefighting Boot Illustration:

M. GLOVES

Structural firefighting gloves will be provided to all certified fire personnel. Gloves shall comply with the minimal standards set forth in NFPA standards.

Leather work gloves shall also be provided to personnel for use as needed during non-IDLH activities.

The Department will not provide vehicle extrication gloves. Individuals may, however, personally purchase these specialty gloves for use during extrication activities. As with all personally owned items, gloves must be inspected and approved annually for use. The individual is responsible for any cost associated with damages of personally owned equipment.

Glove Illustrations:
N. HOOD

Fire resistant hoods shall be provided to all certified fire personnel. Hoods shall be white, almond, or black in color and comply with the minimal standards set forth in NFPA 1971 and OSHA.

Designer hoods (those with non-standard colors or designs) are prohibited.

O. SCBA Masks

A Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) mask shall be provided to all certified fire personnel. Mask will be issued after an initial fit testing and sizing. Recipients are required to be re-tested / re-fitted annually to retain their issued masks.

P. TRAFFIC SAFETY VEST

1. General Guidelines
   a. In order to provide greater safety and visibility for Caroline County Fire-Rescue personnel, fluorescent safety vests shall be worn during day and night highway emergency incidents unless personnel are actively engaged in fire suppression or hazardous materials duties (as per 23CFR634).
   b. Vests shall meet the performance class 2 or 3 requirements of the ANSI / ISEA 107-2004 publication entitled “American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Headwear”.
   c. Vests are not heat / flame resistant; therefore, personnel that are directly exposed to flame, fire, heat and/or hazardous materials should wear reflective turn-out gear.
   d. Personnel should don vest as soon as these direct suppression duties are complete. Highway Emergency Incidents are those that require emergency duties to be performed on or along side of public roadways.
2. Guidelines for safety vest use include but not limited to:
   a. Traffic control
   b. Driver operator of apparatus & assigned vehicles, EMS or other calls where providers are assigned to working in vehicle traffic situations not requiring firefighting PPE;
   c. Rehab sector
   d. Any situation which requires high visibility of personnel (i.e. Mass Casualty Incidents, early morning, evening responses, etc.)
   e. In wooded areas as to alert hunters of your presence during fall and winter months
3. Location and availability of Traffic Vests
   a. Vests will be made availability on ALL CCFR apparatus, units and vehicles for the assigned number of riding positions.

SOP # 104.04
b. Specific Individuals may be issued Traffic Vests as determined by the Fire-EMS chief based on need or functional position.

Q. FORMS

1. PPE Inspection Form