



Amherst County Fire/EMS

Standard Operating Guidelines

Subject:	Personal Protective Equipment
Reference Number:	
Effective Date:	May 1, 2025
Revision Date:	N/A
Signature of Approval:	Chief of Fire/EMS

Purpose: Establish a standard for the utilization of personal protective equipment

Background: Each member required to perform fire and rescue activities, excluding non-fire-certified EMS personnel, will be issued a complete set of structural firefighting gear that meets or exceeds the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1971 - *Protective Clothing for Structural Firefighters*, to include protective coat, pants, gloves, boots, helmet, and interface components.

Procedures:

- All personnel performing firefighting activities or other duties as assigned by Incident Command (IC) at the scene of an emergency shall wear full, appropriate protective clothing, to include helmet, coat, pants, boots, gloves, eye protection, and hood, when required.
- All members working in an atmosphere deemed to be Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) shall wear Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Anyone wearing SCBA shall be required to maintain clean shaving to ensure sealing of the facepiece, in compliance with NFPA 1500 - *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety & Health Program* and OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134, and shall be required to complete and pass the Amherst County annual fit testing.
- Turnout gear worn during structural firefighting shall be no more than 10 years old from the date of manufacture, in compliance with NFPA 1851 - *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*.

- Any member on the scene of an emergency call without full, appropriate protective clothing will not be allowed to enter the “Hot Zone” or participate in any active fire suppression activity. At the discretion and direction of the IC, they may be allowed to help with any non-hazardous work in the cold zone.

- Structure Fires:

- Full, appropriate structural gear and SCBA shall be worn during active fire attack and suppression, and/or until the IC deems it safe to downgrade PPE requirements. Atmospheric monitoring must be completed, and CO levels determined to be at an acceptable PPM level.

- Driver/Pump Operator:

- Driver operators shall minimally wear helmet, gloves, and approved traffic vest while operating an apparatus. Shall not be required to wear full protective clothing while operating the apparatus.

- Motor Vehicle Accidents:

- All personnel operating in or near the roadway shall minimally wear an approved traffic vest and helmet. Any member engaged in extrication or rescue operations should wear full PPE, to include coat, pants, boots, helmet, eye protection, and extrication gloves.

- Vehicle Fires:

- Full, appropriate structural gear and SCBA shall be worn during active fire attack and suppression.

- Brush Fires:

- Personnel operating on brush fires shall minimally wear work shoes or non-safety toe boots, long pants (no shorts), long-sleeve shirt, helmet, and gloves. Eye protection is recommended but not required for fire suppression or handline operations. Leaf blower operators shall wear eye protection. The Incident commander may adjust these requirements based on condition.

- Chainsaw Operations:

- Personnel operating a chainsaw shall minimally wear a helmet, eye protection, forestry coat/pants or long-sleeve shirt and long pants, boots, and chainsaw chaps.

- Turnout Gear Cleaning

- After operating at a structure or vehicle fire, turnout gear shall be washed and dried. A washer/extractor and drying rack is available 24/7 at ACFE administration, as well as many fire stations throughout the county. SCBA mask

and helmet should also be washed using an approved cleaner and warm water.