

**Travis County Emergency Services District No. 9  
Westlake Fire Department  
Standard Operating Guideline**

**Subject: Protective Clothing**

**Effective Date: October 1, 1997**

**Authorized By: Chief Paul Barker Revised Date: April 1, 2004**

---

**I. Purpose**

To establish a policy stipulating the appropriate use and maintenance of protective clothing.

**II. Policy**

- A. Personal protective equipment (PPE) / clothing shall be worn by all members on the fireground at all times unless directed to do otherwise by the IC or medical personnel. The fireground is the interior of any structure that is on fire or that is reported to have a fire in it, the immediate area around any such structure, and the immediate area around any other type of fire (auto, dumpster, trash, wildland, etc.). The area considered part of the fireground will vary depending on the situation. It is intended that anyone in close proximity to a fire or fire building shall wear full protective clothing.
- B. PPE clothing is considered to be helmet, bunker coat, pants and boots, gloves, and Nomex hood that comply with NFPA 1971, Protective Ensemble of Structural Firefighting. Full PPE shall also include respiratory protection, when necessary.
- C. Personal protective equipment worn by members not provided by the Department must comply with the NFPA 1971, Protective Ensemble of Structural Firefighting and pass a Texas Commission of Fire Protection PPE inspection. All new structural PPE purchased by the Department will comply with the current edition of NFPA 1971 at the time of purchase.
- D. Cleaning and maintenance of structural firefighting equipment shall comply with NFPA 1851, Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Structural Fire Fighting Protective Ensembles.

**III. Procedure**

- A. For Wildland fires, the following protective equipment must be worn:
1. General:
    - a) Protective Shelter
    - b) Canteen (mandatory)
  2. Head/Neck - Nomex or PBI hood with standard firefighting helmet, or wildland helmet with shroud and goggles.
  3. Upper Body
    - a) Long-sleeved Nomex uniform shirt buttoned at the sleeves and neck or,
    - b) Turnout coat or,
    - c) Wildland coat.
  4. Lower Body
    - a) Nomex uniform pants or,
    - b) Turnout pants or,
    - c) Wildland pants.
  5. Feet
    - a) Leather lace-up boots to be provided by the firefighter; after approval by a Chief Officer.
    - b) The Department will reimburse members for the purchase of wildland boots up to the current reimbursement rate.
  6. Hands
    - a) Leather firefighting gloves or,
    - b) Leather Wildland gloves
- B. For Medical Alarms, protective clothing includes, at a minimum, latex gloves. Depending on the circumstances and the patient's signs and symptoms, full protective clothing may also include breathing, and eye and splash protection (see policy regarding infectious disease precautions).
- C. For Fire calls the following procedures are in effect:
1. Protective clothing and equipment shall be worn that comply with NFPA 1971 in a manner that will fully utilize the protection afforded by all components. (Helmet with chinstrap secure, face shield and/or ear flaps down; coat sealed with Velcro flap, all snaps

secure, collar up with throat strap secure)

2. If at all feasible, personnel will don their protective clothing prior to responding on alarms. (Optional for drivers and command personnel.) Drivers who are operating pumps on the fireground shall don full protective clothing as soon as their initial supply and / or hand lines are charged.

3. All supplementary and support personnel will maintain the same level of protective clothing and equipment as the firefighters who are on the fireground. Personnel not wearing appropriate protective clothing or equipment shall remain outside the fireground.

4. Personnel operating at the Command Post will not be required to wear protective clothing unless the Command Post is located on the fireground. Personnel who leave the Command Post and enter the fireground shall wear full protective clothing.

5. In some instances, the fire will be extinguished and/or the situation will evolve to a point where it is safe to work in only part of the full protective clothing. Such a reduction in protection can only be authorized by the IC or the Safety Officer. Firefighters will be allowed to remove part of the full protective clothing only after the risks have been carefully assessed. The potential for injury from the fireground hazards should be weighed against the potential for heat stress injuries, excessive fatigue, etc. At incidents where heat is a factor, firefighters should remove as much of the protective clothing as possible while on breaks or in rehab.

6. When responding on medical-related incidents (collisions, rescue alarm, etc.), exam gloves must be worn. If there is a potential for coming in contact with body fluids of the victim, protective eyewear and particulate facemask must be worn at a minimum (these items should be carried and available on every apparatus at all times). At Collisions and Rescue Alarms, full turnouts may provide extra protection and are required when extricating victims from vehicles or when using hydraulic or cutting tools. When working with tools to free victims, leather gloves should be worn over the latex exam gloves.

#### D. Maintenance and Care of Protective Clothing

1. The following records of maintenance and care of protective clothing shall be kept for each garment for a period of five years:

a) Each member must fill out a PPE Inspection Form every six months or any time the garment is in need of advanced

cleaning (other than general washing).

b) Fill out the PPE Inspection form any time the garment is sent in for repairs.

- E. Inspection of Gear and Equipment for TCFP Training Programs / Classes
1. All Students participating in TCFP classes, will have their gear inspected per the above guidelines to ensure that their gear is in compliance.
  2. All students that participate in classes that require the use of SCBA equipment, and use equipment which is not provided by the department, will provide a copy of the inspection log for the equipment and a copy of the flow test for the SCBA.