

SAN ANTONIO FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRE OPERATIONS

Cancer Prevention SOP

1114

4-2-15

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.01 Background

In April of 2013, the Indianapolis Fire Department hosted a workshop on firefighter cancer. The Firefighter Cancer Support Network was the driving force behind the workshop. The information and recommendations that resulted are published in a white paper on cancer in the fire service (*Taking Action against Cancer in the Fire Service*). The White Paper, along with two other cancer studies, will be made available on our department's SharePoint site. Please take the time to read the White Paper and the other two cancer studies (*"Cancer Risk Among Firefighters: A Review and Meta-analysis of 32 Studies"* and *"Firefighter Cancer in the New Fire Environment"*).

.02 Purpose

In an effort to combat the incidence of cancer among our members, giving consideration to recommendations contained in the referenced reports, the SAFD has identified specific actions that will be required moving forward. Most of these actions are "common sense" issues that should be done routinely. Others require that we re-think how things have been done in the past. The focus of this document is the health and well-being of each member of our Fire Department. Please remember to consider your health, the health of your co-workers, and the impact that cancer can have on your family.

.03 Summary of Required Actions:

- A. All firefighters will be issued a 2nd hood. This will allow firefighting personnel to be able to wash and dry one hood after every use, thus allowing a clean hood for use at all times. The areas of the scalp and angle of the jaw are among the most absorbent areas of the body. Currently, our hoods are not manufactured with a moisture barrier. It is obvious then, that the hood must be kept as free of contaminants as possible. Hoods may be washed in a washing machine on a gentle cycle setting. Laundry detergent shall be used to clean the hoods but bleach shall never be used. The hoods can be placed in a clothes dryer. Please run one additional wash cycle to clean the washing machine after washing your hood. **(NOTE: firefighters are not allowed to wear two or more hoods at the same time under any circumstance)**
- B. Wet Decon – Immediate wet decon is essential to reducing contaminants that may have settled on your bunker gear (ex: asbestos). Therefore, wet decon is required anytime your gear may have been exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants, or if the Company Officer, Battalion Chief or Incident Commander deems it necessary. Every effort should be made to wet decon as soon as possible, preferably while still on scene. Use a red-line, at pump pressure, with a half opened nozzle. Rinse at a downward angle from top to bottom.

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- C. Removing gear to return to the station is recommended. Additionally, at the end of each shift, if the gear was exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants, the gear will be rinsed off and hung to dry.
- D. Exposed areas of the body (neck and face) should be wiped off during re-hab.
- E. Shower as soon as possible after being exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants.
- F. No bunker gear shall be allowed in the station.
- G. In order to reduce contamination by diesel exhaust, all apparatus and tools shall be started and idled outside the bay during routine checks and cleaning.
- H. Bay doors shall be open before starting the apparatus and remain open until the apparatus is shut off; stations equipped with exhaust fans must also comply.
- I. Bunker gear locker doors shall be closed to prevent contamination of gear by diesel exhaust.
- J. Station uniforms worn under bunker gear that has been exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants, shall be changed as soon as possible.
- K. Apparatus seats should be cleaned and decontaminated regularly, especially after incidents where passengers were exposed to products of combustion.
- L. Full bunker gear and SCBAs shall be worn through overhaul operations when products of combustion and/or gases and vapors are present.
- M. SAFD members will not use their personal vehicles to relieve companies on scene. SAFD vehicles shall be used for all relief-on-scene scenarios and shall be coordinated by on-duty leadership.

.04 REVISION

This SOP may be revised as necessary to ensure the highest level of cancer prevention.

Yours in Service,



Charles N. Hood, Fire Chief