

Wales Center Volunteer Fire Co., Inc.

Standard Operating Procedure: Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and Personal Alert Safety Systems

Combustion produces heat, toxic gases and smoke, none of which are good for you. Your life may depend on your knowledge and use of SCBA. They are to be used for respiratory protection during interior firefighting and in all other hazardous or oxygen deficient atmospheres.

Interior Firefighters must maintain an acceptable level of competence with SCBA. Only those who have completed Essentials, their annual training and passed their annual physical will be allowed to enter an area requiring SCBA.

PASS (personal alert safety system) devices are attached to the SCBA harnesses. When activated, an alarm will sound if the wearer is motionless. The devices should be activated whenever firefighters are involved in fighting fires, rescue, or other hazardous duties. They can be manually activated (ON) if the wearer needs assistance. In the automatic mode (AUTO), a pre-alert tone will sound 25 seconds after movement has stopped. If no movement is detected within 7-10 seconds, the LED flashes and full alert will sound continuously for up to 10 hours.

EQUIPMENT

1. The SCBA provided will be positive pressure, conforming to CFR 1910.34, 1910.156, certified under 30 CFR part 11, and approved by NIOSH and MSHA.
2. Cylinders are steel, fiberglass wrapped aluminum or composite. The yellow and red cylinders are for exterior use only.
3. The cylinder air obtained from East Aurora Fire Dept. is tested quarterly by a qualified testing lab, and is Grade D-breathing air or better.
4. PASS devices are integrated into each SCBA pack.
5. Firefighters requiring corrective lenses will be provided with the proper frame and mounting hardware. The firefighter will provide the proper prescription lenses.
6. Firefighters, after successfully completing Firefighter I (or equivalent), will be issued a personal face piece. Each firefighter shall be responsible for cleaning and maintenance of his/her assigned unit.

INSPECTION and MAINTENANCE

1. SCBA and PASS will be inspected monthly during radio check, the dates noted on the Vehicle Inspection Sheet. Each SCBA has an individual inspection sheet with inspection instructions. Findings, deficiencies, maintenance and actions taken will be noted on the inspection sheets. Deficiencies will be corrected immediately or the unit will be removed from service and a Chief Officer notified.
2. To ensure proper operation and readiness, SCBA will be cleaned, disinfected and inspected after every use, including training. Facepieces will be washed using mild soap and warm water, rinsed, and disinfected by submerging in a solution of 2 tablespoons chlorine bleach and 1 gallon of warm water. Rinse thoroughly. Air dry before storing in the carrying bags. All straps must be returned to ready positions. Frames, PASS and cylinders are cleaned with a damp cloth. All actions will be noted on SCBA's individual inspection sheet.
3. After use, cylinders will be inspected for large dents or gouges. Those which show exposure to high heat or flames (paint browned or blackened, decals charred or missing, gauge lens melted, etc.) will be removed from service.
4. Steel cylinders will be hydrostatically tested every 5 years, fiberglass wrapped and composite, every 3 years. Separate records will be kept on each cylinder, recording repairs and hydrostatic testing dates.
5. In addition, frequent, random checks will be made by Chief Officers, or other appointed officer(s), to ensure proper maintenance.
6. All SCBA will be inspected annually by qualified service technicians. Repairs will be done by qualified service technicians.

QUALIFICATIONS and TRAINING of INTERIOR FIREFIGHTERS

1. All firefighters will be examined by a physician at least every two years, to establish their fitness. Interior firefighters must achieve satisfactory results on the pulmonary function test to use SCBA. The physician will determine the content of the exam and the frequency, if more or less than every two years.
2. Interior firefighters will not wear anything (hood, eyeglass earpiece, etc.), or have facial hair which impedes the adequate face to facepiece seal. Wearing contact lenses is not allowed.
3. All Interior Firefighters must have completed N.Y.S. Firefighting Essentials or an equivalent as determined by the Chief. In addition, they must annually:
 - 3.1. demonstrate their ability to don and doff the SCBA;
 - 3.2. demonstrate their ability to achieve a face to facepiece seal;
 - 3.3. demonstrate competency in use and emergency procedures; and
 - 3.4. be instructed in maintenance and inspection of SCBA.

USE OF SCBA

1. SCBA will be used for all interior firefighting, vehicle fires and whenever low oxygen levels or toxic gases are present.
2. SCBA and safety lines or harnesses will be used when entering tunnels, tanks, wells, excavations or other such hazards.
3. Firefighters wearing SCBA will always work as a team, with a partner wearing SCBA.
4. When your alarm sounds, notify your partner, and leave with another firefighter immediately.
5. Standby teams, wearing SCBA, will be ready to assist the working teams.
6. Communications, visual or voice, will be maintained with the SCBA team.
7. A rehabilitation station, to evaluate the physical condition of firefighters, will be established whenever SCBA is being used. It will be overseen by EMS personnel or other qualified firefighters.
8. Firefighters will be limited to 2 cylinders per incident, or as recommended by their annual physical exam. They must then report to the rehabilitation station to be evaluated and to rest for at least 15 minutes. If they are found to be fit, they may be authorized to re-enter by the Officer-in-Charge with another 2 cylinder limit.

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