

**Stillwater Fire District  
Stillwater, New York**

**Fire District Policy and Procedure**

**Policy Number: 2 of 2009**

**Policy Name: Fire Fighter Use of SCBA**

**Date Issued: July 13, 2009**

**Effective: July 13, 2009**

**Revised: January 2014**

**Review Date: January 2017**

**I. PURPOSE**

- A. The purpose of this policy is to outline the appropriate use of SCBA for all members of the Fire Company engaged in response activities.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. SCBA, Self Contained Breathing Apparatus is a device worn by responders and others to provide breathable air in a hostile environment.
- B. Fit Test, means the use of a protocol to qualitatively or quantitatively evaluate the fit of a respirator on an individual which complies with OSHA regulations.
- C. Facial Hair, any hair growing on the face of an individual which has the potential to interrupt a proper mask seal.
- D. Contaminated air may include particulates, dust, fogs, fumes, mists, gases, smoke, sprays, or vapors.

**III. POLICY**

- A. In order to reduce occupational diseases and injuries caused by breathing contaminated air, fire fighters shall wear SCBA when there are potential exposures to a contaminate that presents an immediate danger to health or life or probable environmental risk. In addition all fire fighters permitted to wear SCBA shall be required to comply with OSHA/NY PESH standards for a respiratory protection program including annual fit test procedures.
- B. The District's respiratory protection program shall include the use of SCBA whenever there is a risk of contact with contaminated air or under the direction of the Incident Commander or the officer in charge of the apparatus.
- C. Fire Fighters shall be authorized to wear SCBA if they are in compliance with the requirements of the respiratory protection program which includes the completion of an annual medical screening, an annual fit test performed by a licensed health care professional approved by the District and any other requirements such as a medical evaluation which is normally determined by age group or by order of the Board of Fire Commissioners or Chief officer.
- D. Fire Fighters shall not be permitted to wear SCBA if they have facial hair that may interfere with the sealing surface between the face piece and the face or any condition that interferes with the face to face mask seal. Since there is no method to control or police the configuration or amount of facial hair that might be

present or necessary to contribute to the failure of a face piece seal, the District prohibits the maintenance of beards, chin beards, long sideburns, mutton chops or any other accumulation of facial hair in the area of the face piece seal that may interfere with obtaining a proper seal. (most mustache styles are permitted but may be excluded if they are a risk to obtaining a proper seal). Policing of this policy will be performed by the Safety Officers, Chief Officers and the Officers in charge of the apparatus. The final determination of whether facial hair will interfere with the seal of a face mask shall rest with the Board of Fire Commissioners.

#### **IV. PROCEDURE**

- A. Fire fighters wishing to participate as an interior fire fighter shall comply with the respiratory protection program including medical surveillance and annual fit test.
- B. All members engaged in interior structural fire fighting shall use SCBAs
- C. All members engaged in fighting vehicle fires shall use SCBAs
- D. All members responding to any call where there is a potentially hazardous atmosphere shall use SCBA as directed whether inside or outside a structure.
- E. All members shall use SCBA when instructed by the IC, Safety Officer or the apparatus OIC.
- F. Each member shall be issued the proper size face mask and will be responsible for cleaning of maintenance of same.
- G. Individually issued face masks shall be numbered, inventoried and stored in the provided bag. Storage bag shall be marked with the member's name and the corresponding number of the issued mask.
- H. All SCBA shall be cleaned and disinfected as often as necessary to be maintained in a sanitary condition.
- I. All SCBA shall be cleaned and made ready for the next incident immediately upon returning from each incident.
- J. All SCBA air cylinders shall be maintained in a full condition at all times.
- K. SCBA systems which are defective shall be taken out of service and tagged as to their deficiency, and shall be reported to a chief officer for repair.
- L. All SCBA shall be flow tested annually by a certified testing agency according to generally accepted standards with documentation maintained on file according to year.
- M. Breathing air produced by the compressor system located at Station 1 and the compressor on R-103 shall be tested at least annually and shall comply with fitness standards associated with Class D breathing air.
- N. All respirators used in routine situations shall be inspected weekly and during cleaning. Inspection shall include respirator function, tightness of connections, condition of parts, and hydrostatic requirements of associated cylinders.
- O. Training for new fire fighters shall include as a minimum the Fire Fighter 1 course of training but in no circumstances shall a new fire fighter be allowed to use an SCBA with out the following,
  - i. Medical evaluation and fit test by a licensed medical provider contracted by the Fire District,
  - ii. A training program where by each fire fighter can DEMONSTRATE knowledge of how improper fit, usage, or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator, what the limitations and capabilities

of the respirator are, how to use the respirator in emergency situations including situation in which the respirator malfunctions, how to inspect, don and doff, use and check the seals of a respirator, and what the procedures are for maintenance and storage of the respirator and finally how to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators.

1. The training program shall provide a check off of each of the above items and shall be signed by the trainee that they received the training and signed by the trainer.
  - iii. Refresher training for all approved SCBA users shall be conducted annually or more often if possible and documented.
- P. The Board of Fire Commissioners is required to conduct a periodic review to ensure that the program is being properly implemented.
- i. Any deficiencies or deviations will be noted and be immediately addressed by corrective measures and documented.

By Order of Board of Fire Commissioners – Stillwater Fire District

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Chairman Board of Fire Commissioners