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WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP FIRE DISTRICT
TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, GLOUCESTER COUNTY
NEW JERSEY

Board of Fire Commissioners
P.O. Box 653
Turnersville, NJ 08012-0653

Fire Companies:
Grenloch
Hurffville
Whitman Square

FIRE DEPARTMENT POLICY #25-96
regarding
FIREFIGHTER RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

It is the policy of the Washington Township Board of Fire Commissioners to provide and maintain a respiratory protection program to minimize the risk of respiratory injury and ailments to firefighters. It is intended that this policy comply with the provisions of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Z88.5-1981, "Practice for Respiratory Protection for the Fire Service", as required by the PEOSH Standards for Firefighters [N.J.A.C. 12:100-10.10(e)]. It is also intended that the policy be consistent with NFPA 1404, "Standard for a Fire Department Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Program." The respiratory protection program shall consist of the five (5) elements described herein.

1. **Equipment:** Sufficient numbers of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) shall be available to provide one unit for each firefighter subject to exposure to respiratory hazards at an incident scene. SCBA shall be of the open-circuit, positive pressure design and shall meet the requirements of NFPA 1981, "Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for Firefighters." The SCBA shall provide a minimum expected service time of thirty (30) minutes and shall operate in the positive pressure mode only.

   Each SCBA shall be provided with a Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device, which shall be utilized in accordance with the current Standard Operating Procedures. The PASS device shall meet the requirements of NFPA 1982, "Standard on Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS) for Firefighters" if practicable. All new PASS devices purchased shall be in compliance with this standard. In addition, the items described below shall be made available to each firefighter certified to use SCBA in accordance with this policy at no cost to the firefighter. These items will be replaced at no cost to the firefighter on an as-needed basis.

   a. **Corrective Lenses:** Corrective eyeglasses, designed for use with SCBA facepieces and which do not interfere with an effective face-to-facepiece seal, shall be made available to firefighters which normally wear corrective lenses. The use of soft contact lenses shall be permitted with SCBA use, provided that the firefighter wearing such lenses has worn them for at least six months without any problems. The use of contact lenses in lieu of SCBA eyeglasses is at the sole discretion of individual firefighters, and contact lenses will not be provided or purchased by the Washington Township Fire District. The use of SCBA without corrective lenses by firefighters which use them during normal day-to-day functions is strongly discouraged.

   b. **Facepiece:** Each firefighter certified to use SCBA shall be provided with an individual facepiece

for use only by that firefighter. The facepiece shall be sized to properly fit the firefighter as verified by the annual qualitative fit testing procedure outlined hereinafter.

c. **Protective Hood:** Each firefighter certified to use SCBA shall be provided with a protective hood for use only by that firefighter. The protective hood shall meet the applicable requirements of NFPA 1971, "Standard on Protective Clothing for Structural Firefighting."

2. **Air Supply:** Breathing air in SCBA cylinders shall meet the requirements of the Compressed Gas Association G-7.1-1989, "Commodity Specification for Air", with a minimum air quality of Grade D and a maximum dew point of -65°F. The purity of the air from the Fire Department's air compressor shall be checked by a competent laboratory on an annual basis. If the required air quality is not being achieved, the use of the air system shall be discontinued until repairs are made and air quality standards are met, as verified by retesting.

The air cylinders of all SCBA shall be maintained at not less than ninety percent (90%) of the rated pressure of the cylinder. Air cylinders shall be refilled only with approved breathing quality air, as specified above, and shall be filled only by personnel who have been trained on the proper procedures and equipment. Personnel assigned to fill air cylinders shall visually inspect all cylinders before filling. Cylinders that show defects, are damaged, or that have not met hydrostatic test requirements, shall be left unfilled and removed from service. Such cylinders shall be tagged so as to be readily identified as being "out of service."

When a breathing air compressor system is used, it shall be located in an area where the air is free from contamination.

3. **SCBA Operator Training and Certification:** All firefighters must be certified as qualified SCBA operators in accordance with this policy prior to using SCBA in an emergency situation. The SCBA operator certification program includes the requirements described below, all of which must be met by each firefighter to be certified. Upon successful completion of the program by an SCBA operator candidate, a certificate will be issued by the Board of Fire Commissioners documenting that the individual is qualified to use SCBA. The certificate will be signed by the Chairman of the Board of Fire Commissioners or his designee and the Chief of the respective fire company with which the firefighter normally performs his duties.

Certification as a qualified SCBA operator shall be recognized on a District-wide basis, and shall remain in effect in the event that a firefighter transfers from one fire company in Washington Township to another. However, at the discretion of the Chief, any firefighter may be required at any time to demonstrate his ability to meet the performance standards set by this policy.

All firefighters certified to use SCBA shall at least annually successfully demonstrate their ability to meet the performance standards set by this policy. Such demonstration does not constitute a complete requalification and need not include a written examination as required for initial certification. All annual certification updates shall be documented by the respective fire companies.

The SCBA operator certification program includes the elements described below.

a. **Age Requirement:** All candidates for certification must be at least eighteen (18) years old.

b. **Physical Examination:** Prior to initial training, all candidates shall receive and successfully pass a physical examination by a physician appointed by the Board of Fire Commissioners to perform such physicals on behalf of the Washington Township Fire District.

c. **Firefighter Training:** All candidates for certification must have successfully completed a Firefighter 1 program conforming to the standards outlined in N.J.A.C. 5:18-C4.3.

d. **SCBA Training Program:** All SCBA operator candidates shall successfully complete an SCBA training program. The following topics are to be covered in the SCBA training program:

I. Instruction in the principles of operation of the SCBA used by the Washington Township Fire Department.

ii. Instruction on the construction details and limitations of the SCBA used by the Washington Township Fire Department.

iii. Instruction on the hazardous environments that may be encountered, including environments with the following:

- Particulate contaminants
- Gas and vapor contaminants
- Combinations of gas, vapor, and particulate contaminants
- Oxygen deficiency
- High temperatures

iv. Instruction and training for the actual use of SCBA, including the following subjects:

- Procedures for donning and doffing SCBA
- Practice for controlled breathing
- Emergency procedures
- Preventive maintenance, care, and cleaning
- Team operations when using SCBA
- Practice using SCBA in simulated hostile environments (This practice must include at least three separate evolutions in a smoke-house or burn building.)
- Special problems involving the use of SCBA
  - Low temperatures: lenses, exhaust valves, connections, materials problems
  - High temperatures
  - Rapidly changing temperatures
  - Communications difficulties
  - Visibility problems
  - Confined spaces
  - Facepiece-to-face sealing problems

- Use around water
- Hazardous materials, including skin irritants

- Current Standard Operating Procedures in effect in the Washington Township Fire District concerning the use of SCBA

v. Instruction on causes of failures

- Abuse and misuse of equipment
- Psychological and physiological factors
- Unapproved equipment
- Buddy breathing

vi. Evaluation: An evaluation of the SCBA operator candidate shall be performed under the guidance of an SCBA Instructor, certified in accordance with this policy.

- Written test: exhibit understanding of the components, safety features, and limitations of SCBA; recognition of hazards; and knowledge of policies and procedures; etc.

- Practical test: identify SCBA components and explain functions and limitations

- Demonstration of ability to use SCBA: The minimum level of performance shall be for a firefighter wearing full protective clothing to be capable of donning and be fully operational within sixty (60) seconds. This timed performance shall begin with the firefighter standing in full protective clothing and the SCBA laying on the ground and shall stop when the firefighter is properly wearing a fully operational SCBA. The demonstration shall also include a routine check of the SCBA and return to "ready" status.

- Demonstration of emergency operations: Demonstrate the emergency operations that may be required when an SCBA fails, and demonstrate emergency techniques using SCBA to assist other firefighters. The demonstration of assisting firefighters may be performed with live personnel or a training dummy with sufficient weight to simulate an adult human being.

e. **Qualitative Facepiece Fit Test:** The facepiece seal capability of each candidate for certification shall be verified by qualitative fit testing, which shall be repeated on an annual basis and any time that new types of SCBA are issued. Only firefighters with a properly fitting facepiece shall be permitted to function in a hazardous atmosphere with SCBA. Beards or facial hair that interfere with the facepiece seal are prohibited for personnel using SCBA. The following qualitative facepiece fit test procedure shall be followed:

- The firefighter shall don SCBA in an area with fresh air and shall commence breathing with the SCBA.

- The firefighter shall enter a room chosen for testing, after which a fire department training smoke tube will be activated. The firefighter shall remain in the room for at least five minutes. During the five minute period, the firefighter shall be directed to breath deeply, turn or nod the head, and/or talk to make sure that the facepiece does not leak. (If the smoke penetrates the seal, the wearer will usually react involuntarily by coughing or sneezing.)

- If smoke does not penetrate the seal, the facepiece fit is satisfactory.

- If the smoke penetrates the seal, the wearer shall exit the room, redon the SCBA or adjust the facepiece in fresh air, and perform the test a second time.

- If smoke still penetrates the seal, the facepiece fit is unsatisfactory.

- The procedure must be repeated as necessary with different facepiece sizes to ensure a proper fit for all personnel certified to use SCBA.

f. **Endorsement:** After all of the elements of the certification program described have been met by an SCBA operator candidate, the company Chief may request that the candidate be certified to use SCBA by the Board of Fire Commissioners. The request must be in writing and shall be supported by documentation that the candidate has successfully met the requirements of all of these elements. When the Board of Fire Commissioners is satisfied that all requirements have been met, a certificate will be issued to the firefighter verifying that he is qualified to use SCBA when exposed to respiratory hazards in the performance of his duties.

4. **SCBA Instructor Certification:** Fire department personnel may be certified to instruct firefighters in the proper use of SCBA by meeting all of the following requirements:

   a. The instructor candidate must be certified to use SCBA in accordance with this policy and must have maintained such certification for a period of not less than one year, unless a full year has not passed since the adoption of the policy.

   b. The instructor candidate must possess a valid certificate as an Instructor Level 1 issued by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Fire Safety.

   c. The instructor candidate must possess a valid certificate as an SCBA/Smokehouse Instructor issued by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Fire Safety.

   Documentation that all of the requirements for SCBA Instructor certification have been met must be submitted with a written request for such certification to the Board of Fire Commissioners. Upon satisfactory review by the Board of Fire Commissioners, a certificate will be issued to the successful candidate signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Commission.

5. **Standard Operating Procedures:** Standard operating procedures concerning firefighter respiratory

protection shall be developed and maintained by the Board of Fire Commissioners. These procedures shall include provisions for proper use of SCBA, routine care, cleaning, and service checking, and maintenance and repair.

This policy was adopted at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners on October 3, 1996 to become effective on January 1, 1997.

BY:

Edwin L. Etschman, Chairman

Attest:

Donald C. Brown, Secretary

Distribution:

Commissioners
Grenloch Fire Company
Whitman Square Fire Company
Hurffville Fire Company
Washington Township Firemen's Association

Adoption Record:

Original: May 7, 1986
Revised: October 3, 1996