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|  |  | **Blue Ridge Fire District**  **Policy and Procedure** | | |  | General Order Number  **D201** | |  |
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|  | Subject:  **Use and Care of Personal**  **Protective Equipment (PPE)** | | | Effective Date:  **April 1, 2015** | | | Total Pages:  **2** |  |
| Board Approval Date:  **March 21, 2015** | | | Rescinds: |  |
|  | Application:  **All District Personnel** | | *Signed into effect as authorized by the Board of Directors*  John Banning, Fire Chief | | | | |  |
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**Purpose:** To establish a policy addressing the appropriate use of protective clothing.

**Policy:**

1. Full protective clothing shall be worn by all personnel on the fireground for any reason.
2. Full protective clothing is considered to be: helmet w/shield or goggles, structural turnout coat and pants with suspenders, boots, gloves, and issued hood.
3. Personally owned protective clothing shall only be worn with the written approval of the Fire Chief

D. For wildland fires, the following may be worn at the discretion of the IC:

1. Head/Neck – Issued hood **WITH** standard firefighting helmet, OR hood with wildland helmet and goggles.

2. Upper Body

a. Long-sleeved Nomex or 100% FR cotton shirt buttoned at the sleeves and neck, or,

b. Turnout coat, or,

1. Wildland coat, or,
2. Wildland jumpsuit

3. Lower Body

a. Nomex or 100% FR cotton pants, or,

b. Turnout pants, or

1. Wildland pants, or,
2. Wildland jumpsuit

4. Feet

a. Rubberized firefighting boots, or,

b. Leather firefighting boots ( must comply with NFPA 1977 - Specifications for Wildland Firefighting).

1. Hands – NFPA approved Leather structural or wildland firefighting gloves.
2. For Medical Alarms, full protective clothing includes, at a minimum, latex/nitrile exam gloves. Depending on the circumstances and the patient's signs and symptoms, full protective clothing may also include N95 mask, eye and splash protection. Additional PPE such as SCBA & Haz-Mat attire may be indicated.
3. The fireground is the interior of any structure that is on fire, presence of smoke or other noxious gas or that is reported to have a fire in it, the immediate area around any such structure, the immediate area around any other type of fire (auto, dumpster, trash, brush, etc.) The area considered part of the fireground will vary depending upon the situation. It is intended that anyone in close proximity to a fire or fire building shall wear full protective clothing.
4. Personal protective gear and equipment issued by the Blue Ridge Fire District shall be utilized for authorized purposes only. Any other use must be approved, in writing, by the Fire Chief or designated officer.

**Procedure:**

A. Protective clothing and equipment will be worn in a manner that will fully utilize the protection afforded by all components. (Helmet chin strap secure, face shield and/or ear flaps down; coat sealed with Velcro flap, all fasteners secure, collar up with throat strap secure, etc.)

B. If at all feasible, personnel (except driver and personal vehicle response) will don their protective clothing **prior** to responding on alarms.

C. Drivers shall don full protective clothing as soon as practical after their initial line is charged. Drivers shall refrain from wearing structural PPE coat and/or helmets while driving. Exception is donning of structural PPE pants.

D. 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.

E. Personnel operating at the Command Post will not be required to wear protective clothing. Personnel who leave the Command Post and enter the fireground shall wear full protective clothing.

F. 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 may 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, toxic fumes, etc.

H. When responding on medical-related incidents (including Rescue Assignments), latex/nitrile gloves must be worn (donned before patient contact.) Additional protection may be required depending on the situation.

I. At Rescue Assignments, when working with tools to free victims, NFPA (BPR) blood borne pathogen compliant leather gloves should be worn. If leather gloves are not BPR rated, latex/nitrile gloves should be worn under the leather gloves.

J. The employee and supervisor will be required to write a report to the Fire Chief or Designee concerning the circumstances of the injury any time a member suffers a fire or medically related injury or exposure.

1. Damaged or defective equipment will be replaced or repaired as deemed appropriate. Should a question arise, the Fire Chief shall serve as the final authority on repair or replacement of personal protective equipment.
2. When operating at an incident on or near a public roadway (i.e. fire, traffic collision, fluid spills, etc.) approved reflective traffic vests shall be worn when turnout clothing is not being utilized. Helmets will be worn.
3. Extended exposure to UV rays may degrade the protective properties of the clothing. PPE shall be washed when heavily soiled, exposed to blood/body fluids or as determined by the assigned Captain or Fire Chief. When washing PPE follow the established care and reporting guidelines. All personnel are responsible for the proper care and drying of issued protective clothing in order to prevent damage. Turnout coats and pants are to air or drip dry only in a shaded area. Wildland gear may be tumble dried per manufacturer specifications.
4. Issued equipment bags may be used to store and protect PPE when not in use or while traveling.