



BULLETIN » Firefighter Protective Hoods



FIREFIGHTER PPE IS EXPOSED to a wide range of toxic chemicals, biological pathogens, and other hazardous substances. These contaminant exposures can pose significant immediate and long-term dangers to firefighters' health, with an [increased risk of cancer](#) topping the list. General care and maintenance procedures have been established in [NFPA 1851, Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting](#).

Firefighter protective hoods, a primary piece of a firefighter's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), provide a safety interface between the helmet, SCBA face piece, and turnout coat; and are [particularly concerning due to direct exposure to a firefighter's skin](#).

As we await additional scientific research on PPE, it is important that the fire service be aware of the following to reduce potential contaminant exposure:

- ▶ **Protective hoods are in direct contact with the skin.**
- ▶ **The face and neck have been identified as a significant area of dermal exposure to products of combustion and potential carcinogens.**
- ▶ **Firefighter [protective hoods are potential carriers of harmful products](#).**

As part of an overall occupational health and safety program, organizations should educate personnel about the proper use and care of protective clothing, and establish the following practices in accordance with NFPA 1851:

- ▶ **Wash protective hoods after every fire or emergency service use.**
- ▶ **Inspect for damage and continued serviceability after every fire or emergency service use.**
- ▶ **Do not allow protective hoods to be taken home, to a laundromat or to a dry cleaner for washing.**

▲ Firefighter Protective Hood

The [FIRE PROTECTION RESEARCH FOUNDATION](#) is currently conducting a research project that will scientifically identify and establish procedures for ensuring optimum contaminant removal from firefighter PPE, as well as a second research project on Fire Service Contamination Control.

Other NFPA standards related to PPE or contaminant exposure include: NFPA 1500, NFPA 1521, NFPA 1561, NFPA 1581, NFPA 1582, NFPA 1976, NFPA 1001, NFPA 1081, NFPA 1700 and NFPA 472.

To learn more about PPE and to link to awareness resources created by members of the fire service, visit the Fire Protection Research Foundation's [PPE cleaning page](#).

This NFPA bulletin can be found at nfpa.org/protectivehoods

QUESTIONS?

Contact the NFPA Public Fire division at publicfire@nfpa.org



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This Bulletin contains some basic information about firefighter protective hoods. It identifies some of the NFPA documents and requirements in these documents regarding PPE as of the date of publication. This material is not the complete and official position of the NFPA on the referenced topics which is represented solely by the NFPA documents in their entirety. For free access to the complete and most current version of these and all NFPA documents, please go to nfpa.org/standards. The NFPA makes no warranty or guaranty of the completeness of the information in this Bulletin. In using this information, you should rely on your independent judgment and, when appropriate, consult a competent professional and your local authority having jurisdiction.