TOLEDO FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

C-88 SCBA Use Policy

Emergency Manual

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Policy/Procedure

The use of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) is vital for the protection and safety of all personnel exposed to life threatening or contaminated atmospheres. It is the policy of the Toledo Fire and Rescue Department that all personnel shall be equipped with properly fitted and functional SCBA. The Department has compelling interests in the safety and health of every firefighter in the organization. The mandatory use of in-service SCBA is intended to secure protection against those atmospheres that may inflict immediate and or long-term injuries on those required working with them.

All on-duty fire personnel shall be assigned a specific SCBA. They shall be accountable for its condition and function for the duration of their tour. The SCBA shall be maintained in a response-ready condition at all times. Individual facepieces assigned to each member shall be similarly maintained. Any SCBA component found to be in need of repair or replacement shall be immediately taken out of service, documented, and reported through proper channels.

1. Definitions: The terms used in this policy are defined below:

1. **Contaminated Atmosphere:** Any environment that is or is likely to become tainted by harmful or toxic gases, smoke, fumes, dust, vapors, particulate, other dangerous substances, or wherever the atmosphere is or is likely to become oxygen deficient. Contaminated atmospheres certainly include those labeled immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH). They may also include situations where the contaminant is unknown but the circumstances or the situation suggest a cautious response.

2. **In Service:** A ready position of SCBA use; the firefighter dons the SCBA harness assembly properly, puts the facepiece in place on their face, attaches the second stage regulator to the facepiece, and breathes air from the supply cylinder.

3. **Standby:** A ready position of SCBA use; the firefighter dons the SCBA harness assembly, and wears the facepiece around their neck via the neck strap, OR puts the facepiece in place on their face but does not attach the second stage regulator. Ambient air continues to be breathed.

2. Use Policy

1. All fire personnel shall wear and place in service SCBA:
    1. Whenever present in a contaminated atmosphere.
    2. Whenever in an atmosphere that may reasonably become contaminated suddenly.
    3. Whenever in a metered atmosphere found to be oxygen deficient.
    4. Whenever in an atmosphere which is suspected of being contaminated or oxygen deficient.
2. This policy applies to all personnel operating:
    1. In an active fire area, including areas being overhauled.
    2. Directly above an active fire area.
    3. In a potential fire or explosion area, including gas leaks and fuel spills.
    4. In atmospheres where products of combustion are present including vehicle fires and dumpster fires.
    5. Where invisible contaminants are suspected to be present (i.e., airborne particulates or carbon monoxide).
    6. Where toxic products are present, suspected to be present, or could reasonably be expected to be released without warning.
    7. In any confined space not involved in fire, which has not been metered to establish respiratory safety.

SCBA shall be worn by all fire personnel operating at a fire incident outside of the command post area, in areas that are not but may become contaminated by the products of combustion. In those instances, the SCBA may be worn in standby. Examples include operating in non-involved areas of a roof, reporting to an interior “staging area” for deployment, and salvage work in areas below the fire. In most cases, apparatus operators will not be required to wear SCBA unless they become exposed to smoke or other toxic substances.

Premature removal of SCBA must be avoided at all times. If there is any doubt about respiratory safety, SCBA shall be used in-service until the atmosphere is established to be safe by meter testing.

Note: PASS device batteries are to be of alkaline composition only. The manufacturer of the device prohibits use of lithium batteries in PASS devices.

See Also:

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