**HELOTES FIRE DEPARTMENT**

 **Safety 3.05**

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***Protective Clothing: Selection, Care, and Maintenance***

 ***Approved by: R. Scott Moreland***

***R. Scott Moreland, Fire Chief***

**SAFETY – PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**

* Objective
* Purpose
* Records
* Protecting the Public and Personnel From Contamination
* Selection
* Inspection
* Cleaning
* Drying Procedures
* Repair
* Storage
* Retirement, Disposal, and Special Incident Procedures

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**OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish a system in compliance with the Texas Commission on Fire Protection 37 TAC 435.1(3) and in accordance with NFPA 1851. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is designed in part to keep records, protect the public and Helotes Fire Department personnel from contamination, select bunker gear that best fits our needs and in accordance with our PPE Risk Assessment, regularly inspect and clean protective clothing, make repairs, proper storage, retirement and disposal of PPE.

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**PURPOSE**

The department will complete a PPE Risk Assessment in compliance with NFPA 1971, prior to the purchase of all Personal Protective Ensembles.

The Assistant Chief maintains all protective-clothing records for three years after the Personal Protective Ensemble has been retired or destroyed.

The Assistant Chief keeps and inventories all surplus Personal Protective Ensembles when it is issued to personnel.

The Assistant Chief or the Officer in Charge will issue Personal Protective Ensemble to personnel and provide instructions to proper use, inspection and cleaning of the protective ensemble.  It is the receiving personnel/fire fighter’s responsibility to clean their issued personal protective ensemble and report any problems with the gear to the officer in charge or the Assistant Chief. This SOP is available to each employee.

**RECORDS (Chapter 4.3)**

The Helotes Fire Department will maintain a PPE Risk Assessment. The assessment will be reviewed and updated prior to the purchase of all Personal Protective Ensembles.

The Helotes Fire Department keeps records on all PPE, detailing:

* Whom issued to;
* Manufacturer information;
* Maintenance; and
* Retirement

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**PROTECTING THE PUBLIC AND PERSONNEL FROM CONTAMINATION (Chapter 4.5)**

*Risk assessment*

Clean soiled PPE as soon as possible. Maintain the soiled PPE away from public areas to prevent any exposure (of unknown/hazardous materials).

*Contamination containment*

Seal all Biohazard contaminated PPE in a plastic bag, away from public access. **Universal precautions including rubber gloves should be used when handling PPE contaminated with biohazards.** The station or shift officer should be notified and proper decontamination procedures started.

All PPE exposed to Hazardous Materials must have the Haz-Mat substance identified. The priority in this situation is firefighter and public safety. Remove the contaminated PPE and properly decontaminate the firefighter and PPE as soon as possible.

*Public access*

Public access will not be allowed into any areas of the fire station where clean or soiled gear may be stored. Public access will be limited to areas where there is no or minimal exposure to firefighter PPE.

*Procedures*

* Do NOT bring PPE into living areas;
* Do NOT bring PPE into food preparation and eating areas;
* Do NOT bring PPE into training areas; and
* Hands are to be washed after handling PPE

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**SELECTION (Chapter 5)**

Completion of a PPE Risk Assessment for PPE, in accordance with NFPA 1971, is required prior to purchase of any new PPE.

PPE will be selected that will comply with the latest NFPA 1971 *Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting,* ensuring that the Helotes Fire Department we will be able to get the most longevity out of our PPE.

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**INSPECTION (Chapter 6)**

**Do not add accessories to any ensemble element without the written approval of the manufacturer and the approval of Helotes Fire Department Administration.**

*Routine Inspection*

Individual members shall conduct a routine inspection of their protective ensembles and ensemble elements after each use and at the beginning of every tour on duty. Routine inspections shall include as a minimum the inspections of the following ensembles:

* Coat and trouser garment elements
* Hood elements
* Helmet elements
* Glove elements
* Interface components
* Footwear elements
* Drag rescue device (DRD) components

**Coat and Trouser Garment Elements:**

Inspect Coat and Trouser garment Elements for the following:

1. Soiling
2. Contamination
3. Physical damage such as the following:
	1. Rips, tears, and cuts
	2. Damaged or missing hardware and closure systems
	3. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration of any layer)
4. Damaged or missing reflective trim
5. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches
6. Correct assembly and size compatibility of shell, liner, and the drag rescue device (DRD).

**Hood Elements:**

InspectHood Elements for the following:

* 1. Soiling
	2. Contamination
	3. Physical damage such as the following:
1. Rips, tears and cuts
2. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration of any layer)
	1. Loss of face opening adjustment
	2. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Helmet Elements:**

Inspect Helmet Elements for the following:

* 1. Soiling
	2. Contamination
	3. Physical damage to the shell such as the following:
1. Cracks, crazing, dents and abrasions
2. Thermal damage to the shell (bubbling, soft spots, warping, discoloration)
3. Physical damage to the earflaps such as the following:
4. Rips, tears and cuts
5. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting)
6. Damaged or missing components of the suspension and retention systems
7. Damaged or missing components of the face shield/goggle system, including discoloration, crazing, and scratches to the face shield/goggle lens limiting visibility
8. Damaged or missing reflective trim
9. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Glove Elements:**

InspectGlove Elements for the following:

* + 1. Soiling
		2. Contamination
		3. Physical damage such as the following:
1. Rips, tears and cuts
2. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration of any layer)
3. Inverted liner
	* 1. Shrinkage
		2. Loss of elasticity or flexibility
		3. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Interface Components:**

Inspect Interface Components for the following:

1. Soiling
2. Contamination
3. Physical damage
4. Loss or reduction of properties that allow component to continue as effective interface [e.g., loss of   shape or inability to remain attached to the respective element (s) where attachment is required]
5. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Footwear Elements:**

Inspect Footwear Elements for the following:

1. Soiling
2. Contamination
3. Physical damage such as the following:
	1. Cuts, tears and punctures
	2. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration of any layer)
	3. Exposed or deformed steel toe, steel midsole, or shank
4. Loss of water resistance
5. Closure system component damage and functionality
6. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Drag Rescue Device Components:**

InspectDrag Rescue Device (DRD) Components for the following:

* + - 1. Installation in garment
	1. Soiling
	2. Contamination
	3. Physical damage such as the following:
1. Cuts, tears, puncture, cracking or splitting
2. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration)
3. Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

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*Advanced Inspection*

An approved independent service provider shall perform advanced inspection. Helotes Fire Department trained personnel may perform advanced inspection procedures on components other than garment elements. Only the members who have received training may perform advanced inspections. Members must have written verification of training.

**Conduct an *Advanced Inspection* of all protective ensemble elements when a routine inspection indicates that a problem could exist or once every 12 months, documenting all findings.**

**Garment Element**

Inspect Garment Element separable layers for the following:

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage to all layers, such as the following:

* + - 1. Rips, tears, cuts and abrasions
			2. Damaged or missing hardware
			3. Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration of any layer)

Loss of moisture barrier integrity as indicated by any of the following:

* + - 1. Rips, tears, cuts or abrasions
			2. Discoloration
			3. Thermal damage

Evaluation of system fit and coat/trouser overlap

Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

Loss of material physical integrity (e.g. ultraviolet (UV) or chemical degradation) as evidenced by discoloration, significant changes in material texture, loss of material strength, loss of liner material, and shifting of liner material.

Loss of wristlet elasticity, stretching, runs, cuts, or burn holes

Reflective trim integrity, attachment to garment, reflectivity or damage

Label integrity and legibility

Hook and loop functionality

Liner attachment systems

Closure system functionality

Accessory compliance

Correct assembly and size compatibility of shell, liner, and DRD

**Hood Elements**

Inspect Hood Elementsfor the following:

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage such as the following:

Rips, tears, and cuts

Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, discoloration of any layer)

Shrinkage

Loss of material elasticity or stretching out of shape

Loss of seam integrity or broken or missing stitches

Loss of face opening adjustment

**Helmet Elements**

Inspect Helmet Elements for the following:

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage to the shell such as the following:

Cracks, dents, and abrasions

Thermal damage to the shell (bubbling, soft spots, warping, or discoloration)

Physical damage to ear flaps such as the following:

Rips, tears, cuts

Thermal damage charring, burn holes, melting or discoloration of any layer

Damaged or missing components of the suspension and retention systems

Functionality of suspension and retention systems

Damaged or missing components of the face shield/goggle system, including discoloration or scratches to the face shield/goggle lens limiting visibility

Functionality of face shield/goggle system

Damage to impact cap

Damaged or missing reflective trim

Accessory compliance

Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Glove Elements**

Inspect Glove Elements for the following:

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage such as the following:

Rips, tears, and cuts

Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting or discoloration of any layer)

Inverted liner

Loss of seam integrity or broken or missing stitches

Shrinkage

Loss of Flexibility

Loss of elasticity and shape in wristlets

Accessory compliance

**Footwear Elements**

Inspect Footwear Elements for the following:

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage such as the following:

Cuts, tears, punctures, cracking, or splitting

Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting or discoloration of any layer)

Exposed or deformed steel toe, steel mid soul, or shank

Loss of seam integrity, delamination, or broken or missing stitches

Loss of water resistance

Closure system component damage and functionality

Excessive tread wear

Condition of lining such as:

Tears

Excessive wear

Separation from outer layer

Heel counter failure

Accessory compliance

**Interface components**

Inspect Interface componentsfor the following:

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage

Loss or reduction of properties that allow component to continue as effective interface, such as loss of shape or inability to remain attached to the respective element(s), if attachment is required

Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

**Drag Rescue Device (DRD) Components**

Inspect DRD Components for the following:

Installation in garment

Soiling

Contamination

Physical damage such as the following:

Cuts, tears, punctures, cracking or splitting

Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, or discoloration)

Loss of seam integrity and broken or missing stitches

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*Complete Liner Inspection*

Complete liner inspection shall be performed by an approved independent service provider. The Helotes Fire Department Captain in charge of PPE shall be responsible for complete liner inspection records.

Conduct complete liner inspections of all garment elements after 3 years in service and annually thereafter or whenever advanced inspections indicate that a problem might exist. Expose all layers of the liner system for inspection and testing.

Conduct a complete liner inspection of all garment elements after 2 years in service and annually thereafter following the replacement of the moisture barrier.

Document and file all findings of the complete liner inspection.

**Moisture Barrier Components**

Inspect Moisture Barrier Componentsfor the following:

Physical damage to all layers and sides of each layer such as the following:

Rips, tears, cuts, and abrasions

Thermal damage (charring, burn holes, melting, or discoloration of any layer

Loss of seam integrity, broken or missing stitches, and loose or missing moisture barrier seam tape.

* + - 1. Material physical integrity; UV or chemical degradation as evidenced by discoloration, significant changes in material texture, loss of material strength, loss of liner material, or shifting of liner material.
			2. Delamination as evidenced by separation of film from substrate fabric, flaking or powdering

Use a hydrostatic test to evaluate water penetration barrier, and show no leakage in the moisture barrier.

File a record of each water-penetration barrier test/evaluation made.

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**Cleaning and Decontamination (Chapter 7)**

Ensembles and ensemble elements shall be evaluated by the wearer for application of appropriate cleaning level after each use.

Immediately retire ensembles and ensemble elements after confirmation of contamination by CBRN terrorism agents. Ensembles and ensemble elements with CBRN terrorism agents are not cleaned or decontaminated.

Ensembles and ensemble elements that are known or suspected to be contaminated with hazardous materials shall be evaluated on the incident scene by members of the organization authorized by the organization to conduct a preliminary assessment of the extent of contamination and the need for ensemble or ensemble elements to be isolated, tagged, and bagged on scene.

Contaminated ensembles and ensemble elements shall be:

1. Isolated during the personnel decontamination process;
2. Removed from service until the contaminant or suspected contaminant is identified; and
3. Elements can receive specialized cleaning, as necessary, to remove the specific contaminant(s).

Once identified, the organization shall consult the supplier of the contaminant and the manufacturer of the ensemble and ensemble elements for an appropriate decontamination agent and process.

A member(s) of the organization who has received training in the cleaning of ensembles and ensemble elements shall be responsible for performing or managing specialized cleaning of elements contaminated with hazardous materials.

Ensembles and ensemble elements that are known or suspected to be contaminated with body fluids shall be evaluated on the incident scene by members of the organization authorized to conduct a preliminary assessment of the extent of contamination and need for the ensemble or ensemble elements to be isolated, tagged, and bagged at the incident scene. **Rubber Latex gloves should always be worn when handling ensembles contaminated with body fluids. Always use universal precautions when handling elements known or suspected to be contaminated with body fluids.**

Soiled or contaminated elements shall not be brought into the home, washed in home laundries, or washed in public laundries unless the public laundry has a dedicated business to handle protective ensembles and ensemble elements.

Commercial dry cleaning shall not be used as a means of cleaning or decontaminating ensembles and ensemble elements unless approved by the ensemble or ensemble element manufacturer.

When contract cleaning or decontamination is used, the ISP shall demonstrate, to the organization’s satisfaction, that the procedures for cleaning and decontamination do not compromise the performance of ensembles and ensemble elements.

*Routine Cleaning*

The end users shall be responsible for the routine cleaning of their issued ensemble and ensemble elements.

The end user shall examine the manufacturer’s label and user information for instructions on cleaning and drying that the manufacturer provided with the ensemble or ensemble element.  In the absence of manufacturer’s instructions or manufacturer’s approval of alternative procedures for the ensemble or ensemble element, the routine cleaning and drying procedures provided in this section shall be used.

**Routine CleaningProcess:**

1. Where possible, the contamination levels shall be evaluated and cleaning shall be initiated at the emergency scene.
2. Ensembles and element layers shall be isolated whenever possible to avoid cross contamination.
3. Any dry debris shall be brushed off.
4. Other debris shall be gently rinsed off with water. Heavy scrubbing or spraying with high-velocity water jets such as a power washer shall not be used.
5. Where necessary, a soft bristle brush shall be used to gently scrub, and the ensemble or element shall be rinsed off again.
6. Where necessary, elements for routine cleaning shall be cleaned in a utility sink designated for personal protective equipment (PPE) cleaning and decontamination using the following procedures:

Heavily soiled or spotted areas shall be pretreated.  Chlorine bleach, chlorinated solvents, active-ingredient cleaning agents, or solvents shall not be used without the ensemble or element manufacturer’s approval.

Water temperature shall not exceed 40 degrees Centigrade or 105 degrees Fahrenheit.

Mild detergents with a pH range of not less than 6.0 pH and not greater than 10.5 pH as indicated on the product MSDS or original product container shall be used.

* + - * 1. Protective gloves and eye/face splash protection shall be worn.
				2. Element(s) shall be gently scrubbed using a soft bristle brush.
				3. Element(s) shall be thoroughly rinsed.
				4. Element(s) shall be inspected and, where necessary, shall be rewashed or submitted for advanced cleaning procedures.  The manufacturer shall be consulted if stronger cleaning agents are required.
				5. Elements shall be dried in accordance with the drying procedures as noted in the program.
				6. Following the routine cleaning procedure, the utility sink shall be rinsed.

**Garment Elements**

Additional Requirements for Routine Cleaning:

* 1. Routine cleaning procedures for cleaning garment elements shall be used only for spot cleaning of the element and shall be performed in a utility sink.
	2. To avoid cross contamination, garment element layers shall be isolated whenever possible.
	3. Cleaning of the entire garment element shall be accomplished using advanced cleaning procedures.

**Helmet Elements**

Additional Requirements for Routine Cleaning:

* 1. If it is necessary to totally immerse the helmet, the impact cap shall be separated from the helmet shell.  Each element component shall be washed and dried separately before reassembly.
	2. Solvents shall not be used to clean or decontaminate helmets or helmet components.  The manufacturer shall be consulted if stronger cleaning agents are required.
	3. Helmets shall not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action from tumbling or agitation.

**Glove Elements**

Additional Requirements for Routine Cleaning:

Glove Elements shall not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action from tumbling or agitation.

**Footwear Elements**

Additional Requirements for Routine Cleaning:

Footwear Elements shall not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action from tumbling or agitation.

*Advanced Cleaning and Decontamination*

A verified ISP or the organization’s trained personnel shall perform advanced cleaning.

The advanced cleaning shall be managed by a member of the organization or conducted by members of the organization who have received training in the advanced cleaning of protective ensembles and ensemble elements. The ensemble or ensemble element manufacturer and the organization shall determine the level of training required to perform advanced cleaning.  The ensemble or ensemble element manufacturer shall provide written verification of training.

Ensemble and ensemble elements that are soiled shall receive advanced cleaning prior to reuse.

Ensemble and ensemble elements that are issued and used shall receive advanced cleaning at the time of advanced inspection if not subjected to advance cleaning in the preceding 12 months.

The element manufacturer or a verified ISP, who will provide written documentation of training, shall perform the training of the organization’s personnel.

Organizations shall examine the manufacturer’s label and user information for instructions on cleaning and drying that the manufacturer provided with the element.  In the absence of manufacturer’s instructions or manufacturer’s approval of alternative procedures for the ensemble or ensemble element, the advanced cleaning and drying procedures provided in this section shall be used.

Advanced cleaning of ensembles and ensemble elements shall be conducted by machine unless specifically prohibited.

**Washing Machines**

 The following procedures shall be used for machine washing:

The machine shall not be overloaded.

Heavily soiled or spotted areas shall be pretreated.  Chlorine bleach, chlorinated solvents, active-ingredient cleaning agents, or solvents shall not be used without the ensemble or ensemble element manufacturer’s approval.

All closures, including pocket closures, hooks and lops, snaps, zippers, and hooks and keeps shall be fastened.

* + - 1. Water temperature shall not exceed 40 degrees Celsius or 105 degrees Fahrenheit.
			2. A mild detergent with a pH range of not less than 6.0 pH and not greater than 10.5 pH as indicated on the product MSDS or original product container shall be used.
			3. Washing machines with the capability of drum RPM adjustment shall be adjusted so the g-force does not exceed 100g for all elements.
			4. Machine manufacturer’s instructions shall be followed for proper setting or program selection for the specific element being washed.
			5. The element shall be inspected and rewashed if necessary.
			6. Where the machine is also used to wash items other than protective ensemble elements, it shall be rinsed out by running the machine without a laundry load through a complete cycle with detergent and filled to the maximum level with water at a temperature of 49-52 degrees Celsius or 120-125 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Garment Elements**

Additional Requirements for Advanced Cleaning:

1. If the coat element has a drag rescue device (DRD) and the DRD is removable, the DRD shall be removed prior to the coat being laundered.  If the DRD also requires cleaning, it shall be placed in a separate mesh bag for washing and drying.
2. Where the shells and liners of protective garment elements are separable, those items shall be cleaned and decontaminated only with like items.
3. Separable liner systems shall be turned inside out so the moisture barrier is on the inside for both machine washing and machine drying.

**Helmet Elements**

Additional Requirements for Advanced Cleaning:

1. Detachable items shall be removed from the helmet and shall be washed and dried separately.
2. Helmets shall not be machine cleaned or dried using equipment that produces mechanical action by tumbling or agitation.

**Glove Elements**

Additional Requirements for Advanced Cleaning:

Gloves shall not be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action by tumbling or agitation.

**Footwear Elements**

Additional Requirements for Advanced Cleaning:

Footwear shall not be machine cleaned or dried using equipment that produces mechanical action by tumbling or agitation.

**Hood Elements**

Additional Requirements for Advanced Cleaning:

Hoods shall be permitted to be machine-washed and machine dried with garment liners.

**Ensembles Certified to the Optional CBRN Requirements of NFPA 1971**

Additional Requirements for Advanced Cleaning:

The manufacturer shall be consulted to determine if any special handling procedures or the removal of interface components or other components must be undertaken prior to advanced cleaning.

*Drying Procedures*

The Helotes Fire Department shall examine the manufacturer’s label and user information for instructions on drying procedures that the manufacturer provided with the ensemble or ensemble element.  In the absence of manufacturer’s instructions or manufacturer’s approval of alternative procedures, the drying procedures provided in this section shall be used.

The following procedures shall be used for air-drying:

Place elements in an area with good ventilation.

Do not dry in direct sunlight.

Make sure ensembles are dried completely before placing into storage.

**Machine drying will not be permitted.**

**REPAIR (Chapter 8)**

* Basic repairs
* Advanced repairs
* Moisture barrier repairs

All repairs shall be out sourced and performed by a qualified ISP (Independent Service Provider)

The ensemble to be repaired should be washed and dried properly before being sent off for repair. **(The ISP will not repair the garment if it’s dirty)**

**STORAGE (Chapter 9)**

* Unissued storage
* Issued storage

Unissued ensembles shall be stored together. They will receive an advanced cleaning prior to being placed in storage. The ensembles shall be stored out direct sunlight.

Issued ensembles shall be kept clean and stored in a gear bag or a locker out of direct light.

**RETIREMENT, DISPOSITION, AND SPECIAL INCIDENT PROCEDURES (Chapter 10)**

* Condition
* Age
* Disposal method

Ensembles shall be retired when their condition is no longer deemed safe and cannot be repaired at a reasonable cost.

The ensemble shall be retired at ten years of age.

The ensemble shall be retired if a hazardous material cannot be properly removed from the ensemble or has had degrading effect on the material.

The ensemble shall be disposed of in a manner in accordance with NFPA 1851.

***Special incident procedure***

In the event that a fire fighter is seriously injured or killed, provisions will be made for the immediate removal from service and preservation of all structural firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements that were worn by fire fighters who were victims at the incident.

The Chief or the shift commander shall place the gear in a secure location and maintain the custody of the ensembles and ensemble elements with controlled documented access.

Non-destructively tag and store all such structural firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements in paper or cardboard containers to prevent further degradation or damage. Do not use plastic or airtight containers.

The Fire Chief and fire department officers or an outside expert examines the structural firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements, and determines the condition thereof.

It is at the Chiefs discretion to keep an ensemble and ensemble elements.