

Subject:	OVERHAUL & POST FIRE DECONTAMINATION
Section:	PPG# 4400.9
Chapter:	Operations
Effective Date:	7/1/98

1.0 POLICY

- 1.1 It is the policy of Thurston County Fire Protection District No.5 & 9 to examine buildings for structural deficiencies, fire extension, hidden fires and to identify materials likely to contain asbestos, following fire knock-down and prior to commencement of overhaul operations.
- 1.2 Thurston County Fire Protection District No.5 & 9 will ensure the decontamination of exposed individuals and equipment following a structure fire incident.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 **Asbestos:** A demonstrated human carcinogen that causes lung cancer and mesothelioma, a cancer of the chest and abdominal linings. Also known to cause a serious lung disorder known as asbestosis.
- 2.2 **Contaminated:** The presence or the reasonably anticipated presence of nuisance materials foreign to the normal atmosphere, blood, hazardous waste, or other potentially infectious materials on an item or surface.
- 2.3 **Contamination:** The process of transferring a hazardous material from its source to people, animals, the environment, or equipment, which may act as a carrier.
- 2.4 **Decontamination:** (1) The physical or chemical process of reducing and preventing the spread of contamination from persons or equipment used at an incident.
- 2.5 **Full protective clothing:** Helmet, bunker coat, bunking pants, boots, gloves and self-contained breathing apparatus.
- 2.6 **Hazardous atmosphere:** Any atmosphere, either immediately or not immediately dangerous to life or health, which is oxygen deficient or which contains a toxic or disease-producing contaminant.
- 2.7 **Overhauling:** That portion of fire extinguishment involving discovery of hidden fires or

smoldering material.

- 2.8 **Structural deficiencies:** Any time the structural integrity of a structure has been compromised, i.e. damage to walls, ceiling, support beams, columns, floor joists, rafters.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Prior to overhaul operations, the Incident Commander and the Safety Officer shall institute a survey of the emergency scene for possible safety hazards.

4.0 GUIDELINES

- 4.1 The primary objective of post-fire operations shall be to ensure complete extinguishment, prevent additional damage, protect personal property and ensure the health and safety of the occupants and members of the department.
- 4.2 The primary emphasis during post-fire operations shall be placed on the safety of all members involved in the overhaul of the fire.
- 4.3 Members engaged in post fire fighting operations shall wear full protective clothing and Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus during the overhaul and debris removal phase necessary to prevent re-ignition, where there is the possibility of asbestos contamination, or anytime harmful airborne particulate and/or gases are present.
- 4.4 Fire Investigators shall wear protective clothing and protective equipment to provide protection from the hazards to which they likely may be exposed. Such protective clothing and protective equipment shall be suitable for the tasks the investigator is expected to perform.
- 4.5 After the Incident Commander and Safety Officer have made the safety site survey, hazardous conditions or areas shall be barricaded, or personnel shall be assigned to immediately correct the hazardous situation. All members and other personnel shall be made aware of unsafe areas.
- 4.6 Overhaul in buildings that are obviously going to be demolished or which have previously been condemned as unsafe shall be limited to the amount necessary to ensure complete extinguishment.
- 4.7 After the fire has been extinguished and overhaul has been completed, the fire ground commander shall keep everyone out of the building and post a fire watch if necessary.
- 4.8 The following decontamination procedures shall be adhered to during and after every fire where there is the possibility of asbestos or toxic material exposure:

- (a) Overhaul of the fire shall be performed with the least number of members and personnel exposed as possible.
- (b) All members exposed the fire scene shall be lightly sprayed with water with their SCBA still in place.
- (c) Secondary decontamination/cleaning should be considered upon return to the station following recommended procedures listed in Appendix of WAC 296-305-0800.
- (d) After the protective clothing has been cleaned, clean helmets, boots, gloves and all other equipment that was exposed.
- (e) Exposed personnel should immediately take a shower upon return to their station.

5.0 REFERENCES

Appendix A: Transition Safety Survey