ON-SCENE DECON

Los Angeles County Fire Chief Daryl L. Osby
NIOSH’s 2015 study of 30,000 firefighters revealed that we have a higher rate of cancer than the general public.
On-scene decon reduces the level and duration of exposure to cancer causing chemicals.
LACoFD will be implementing on scene decontamination in the field.
I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose: To provide Los Angeles County Fire Department policy and procedure regarding on scene decontamination of personal protective equipment (PPE) and skin following the exposure to the products of combustion. This policy extends to decontamination of the skin using an off scene shower.

B. Background: On scene decontamination of PPEs and skin is performed to remove contaminants following exposure to the products of combustion. On scene decontamination can reduce hazardous compounds entering the body through absorption, ingestion and inhalation. Showering as soon as possible after an incident can further reduce absorption of hazardous compounds.

C. Scope: This instruction applies to all Department personnel involved in on scene emergency operations resulting in exposure to the products of combustion that can be removed using the described procedures. The decontamination instruction outlined in this Department policy may be required when determined by the incident commander.

D. Author: The Deputy Fire Chiefs, the Emergency Operations Regional Bureaus shall be responsible for the development, revision, and annual review of this instruction. The Regional Director shall be consulted for changes concerning changes to this instruction.

E. Objective: To provide safe on scene decontamination of PPEs and skin to reduce the possibility of hazardous compounds found in the products of combustion from entering the body.

II. RESPONSIBILITY

A. All uniformed personnel exposed to the products of combustion are responsible for ensuring they complete on scene decontamination as directed by the incident commander (IC) or higher designee and after completing all operational assignments. This includes returning to the station for showers when directed by the IC.

B. Incident commanders are responsible for:

1. Determining when on scene decontamination is required.

2. Determining the level of firefighting decontamination appropriate for personnel.
The Incident Commander designates the level of decontamination based on exposure.
Personnel will remain in full PPE and face pieces throughout decon.
LIGHT exposure consists of a dry brushing head to toe, front to back.
MODERATE to HEAVY exposure consists of water rinse and soap scrub.
Following decon, personnel will doff their PPEs and turnouts and wipe skin with sanitation wipes.
Personnel who are released on scene will remain assigned to the incident until they have showered and placed clean PPEs on the apparatus.
Each of our firefighters has a second set of turnouts. We also contract with a vendor for turnout cleaning and extraction.