



# MOUNTAIN BROOK FIRE DEPARTMENT

POLICY NO. 105.05 VOLUME: 1

SUBJECT: SCBA - Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: 4/1/2018 - revised  
Chris J. Mullins, Fire Chief

**SCOPE AND PURPOSE:** The intent of the SCBA policy is to avoid any respiratory contact with products of combustion, super-heated gases, toxic products or other hazardous contaminants as well as any area of confined space or unknown area that is determined to be Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH).

The use of breathing apparatus means that all personnel shall have face pieces in place, breathing air from the supply provided.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of the Mountain Brook Fire Department that all personnel expected to respond and function in areas of atmospheric contamination (IDLH atmosphere) shall be equipped with self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) which meets NFPA 1981. Each firefighter shall be trained in its proper use and maintenance.

Personnel shall achieve a non-leaking face piece to skin seal with the mask. Facial hair shall not be allowed at points where the SCBA face piece is designed to seal with the face. Individual members shall be accountable for compliance with this requirement. Annual fit checks shall be scheduled by the Safety Officer.

Regular maintenance (every 6 months) shall be performed by department SCBA technicians to maintain batteries for PASS, HUD, Voice Amp, and overall condition of all components to identify and correct problems as required by NFPA 1852.

It is the responsibility of each firefighter to ensure all personal protective equipment including SCBA is checked at the beginning of each shift, after each use, and at any other time it may be necessary to render the equipment in a ready state of condition. Each member shall be accountable for their assigned personal face piece when issued.

If a SCBA is found to be functioning improperly, it shall be taken out of service, reported and replaced immediately. SCBA shall be tested annually to ensure functionality of all assembly components and include hydrostatic testing of SCBA cylinders and air quality sampling of cylinder fill stations.

## **Daily Inspection:**

SCBA shall be inspected daily during apparatus check and should include:

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- Face-piece seal and functional exhalation valve
- Cylinder air level
- Test regulator and bypass valve
- Operate pass device and voice amp
- Supplied Air system on Ladder 1 shall be inspected monthly

## **Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus shall be used by all personnel operating:**

- in a contaminated (IDLH) atmosphere
- in an atmosphere which may suddenly become contaminated
- in an atmosphere which is oxygen deficient
- in an atmosphere which is suspected of being contaminated or oxygen deficient

## **This includes all personnel operating:**

- in an active fire area
- directly above an active fire area
- in a potential explosion of fire area, including gas leaks and fuel spills
- Where invisible contaminants are suspected to be present (Carbon Monoxide during overhaul)
- where toxic products are present, suspected to be present, or may be released without warning
- in any confined space which has not been tested to establish respiratory safety.

In addition to the above, SCBA shall be worn by all personnel operating at fire incidents above ground, below ground or in any other area which is not, but which may become contaminated by products of combustion or other hazardous substances. In these circumstances only, the SCBA may be worn with the face piece removed. The wearing of SCBA in these situations provides that it will immediately be available for use should conditions change or if personnel are to enter an area where the use of SCBA is required.

Premature removal of SCBA must be avoided at all times. This is particularly significant during overhaul when smoldering materials may produce increased quantities of carbon monoxide and other toxic products. In these cases, SCBA must be used or the atmosphere changed.

In routine fire situations, the decision to remove SCBA shall be made by company officers with the approval of the Shift Commander, based on an evaluation of atmospheric conditions. Prior to removal, fire areas shall be monitored by available gas monitors for CO and other contaminants and shall be thoroughly ventilated and when necessary.

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Any Member utilizing two bottles of air during an incident will be sent to rehab (hydration and rest).

Company officers shall maintain an awareness of air consumption and physical readiness and at all times while using SCBA adhere to the following air management guideline:

- Pre-entry buddy check to ensure a minimum of 4050 psi air levels before entering the hazardous atmosphere.
- Follow the Rule of Air Management when operating in any hazardous atmosphere. Maintain situational awareness of egress, point of no return, size and layout of structure, and continually assess air supply.
- When the first member of any team has their 50% Heads-Up Display (HUD) light activate (two flashing amber lights), the officer shall radio command that the team is at 50% air. This report should be in the CARE (conditions, air/actions, radio/resources, and egress) format. This allows command to pre-plan for replacing that team in the hazardous atmosphere.
- If a team member works into their reserve air (33%) and their low-air warning bell begins to ring in the hazard area, the officer shall report over the radio to command a CARE report including their unit location, that a team member's low-air warning bell is ringing, and an estimation of how close they are to the exit.

The department Safety Officer shall conduct a proficiency evaluation of all members expected to don SCBA on an annual basis. Each member shall be able to demonstrate a high level of proficiency and compatibility with the SCBA under conditions which simulate those expected as a job requirement. A face piece to skin seal shall also be demonstrated. (See Wellness and Fitness 106.09)

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