



# OGLETHORPE COUNTY FIRE RESCUE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

**TITLE: Use of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus**    **SECTION/TOPIC: Emergency Operations**

**ISSUE DATE: January 11, 2021**

These SOPs/SOGs are based on FEMA guidelines FA-197

## 1.0 SCOPE

- 1.1 This guideline describes when SCBA should be worn in order to provide maximum safety to firefighters operating at an emergency scene.

## 2.0 PURPOSE:

- 2.1 Firefighters are frequently called to respond to emergencies where the presence of toxic smoke or fumes, or lack of adequate oxygen content in the atmosphere, present significant health hazards.
- 2.2 The purpose of this guideline is to establish guidelines for the use of SCBA to properly address these potential hazards.

## 3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

- 3.1 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) are to be operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
  - 3.1.1 Only personnel who have had SCBA, fit testing, and respiratory protection training will wear SCBA.
- 3.2 SCBAs shall be worn at all times as herein described:
  - 3.2.1 During interior structural fire suppression, overhaul, or salvage operations; and
  - 3.2.2 During exterior fire operations where smoke is present or the potential for development of smoke is present (i.e. roof ventilation, weather conditions/wind direction changes); and
  - 3.2.3 During all dumpster and vehicle fires; and
  - 3.2.4 During any emergencies when operating in enclosed spaces; and
  - 3.2.5 During any operation when there is a lack of breathable air, or the potential exists for a lack of breathable air.
- 3.3 SCBAs shall be worn in all other situations when a firefighter is either directed by an officer, or when a firefighter feels it is necessary.
- 3.4 Facial hair that interferes with the proper seal of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) shall not be allowed.
  - 3.4.1 Neatly trimmed sideburns and mustaches are permitted provided they do not interfere with the use of protective clothing or equipment.

## 4.0 PERSONAL ALERT SAFETY SYSTEMS (PASS DEVICES)

- 4.1 PASS Devices have been provided on each SCBA and are to be used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

- 4.2 Prior to entering any atmosphere requiring the use of SCBA, the PASS Device will be activated by each firefighter.
- 4.3 If a pre-use inspection reveals that the Personal Distress Device is not functioning, the entire air pack should be removed from service as detailed below.

## **5.0 REMOVAL OF SCBA FROM SERVICE**

- 5.1 Should there be any apparent air pack malfunction, pack alarm malfunction, or PASS Device malfunction, the SCBA should immediately be removed from service.
- 5.2 Any firefighter discovering such a problem will immediately bring the SCBA to an officer or driver/operator and report the condition.
- 5.3 That officer or driver/operator will immediately remove the SCBA from service.
  - 5.3.1 This will ensure that another firefighter cannot accidentally use the malfunctioning SCBA.