INTRODUCTION

Purpose: to provide a standard operational policy for the use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA).

Intent: to attempt to avoid any respiratory contact with products of combustion, super heated gases, toxic products or other hazardous contaminants.

POLICY

It is the policy of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD) that all personnel expected to respond and function in areas of atmospheric contamination shall be equipped with SCBA and trained in its proper use and maintenance.

PROCEDURE

A. ANNUAL FIT TESTING

Annual fit testing of employees using SCBA will be performed in accordance with Training Bulletin “SCBA Annual Fit Test”. Members shall achieve a non-leaking facepiece-to-skin seal with the mask. Facial hair shall not prevent a “good face seal” with the SCBA respirator, as defined in 29 CFR 1910 and Title 8, 5144 Cal-OSHA. Individual members shall be accountable for compliance with this requirement.

B. ANNUAL EVALUATION

All SRVFPD members issued an SCBA facepiece shall be evaluated in the use of SCBA both quarterly and annually. 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. Each member is also required to undergo a physical examination, facepiece, and N95 mask fit test annually to assure fitness and a proper seal to the face if they are expected to respond and function in areas of atmospheric contamination.

C. REMOVING SCBA FROM SERVICE

If an SCBA is found to be functioning improperly, it shall be taken out of service, tagged, reported and replaced immediately. If a replacement SCBA is not available at the station or on the unit, a replacement SCBA should be obtained from Station 31.
D. WEARING OF SCBA

1. Each suppression member of the Operations Division shall be accountable for one (1) SCBA and shall check the condition of that SCBA 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 personal facepiece and regulator.

2. Company officers shall assign a specific SCBA to each member. Each crew member will be responsible of the proper use and function of that SCBA.

3. The use of SCBA means that all personnel shall have facepieces in place, while breathing air from the supply provided.

4. SCBA shall be used by all personnel operating:
   - in a contaminated atmosphere
   - in an atmosphere which may suddenly become contaminated
   - in an atmosphere which is oxygen deficient (< 19.5%)
   - 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 or fire area, including gas leaks and fuel spills
   - where products of combustion are visible in the atmosphere, including vehicle fires and trash or dumpster fires.
   - where invisible contaminants are suspected to be present, or may be released without warning
   - in any confined space which has not been tested to establish respiratory safety and which supplied air respirators are not in use.

5. 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 facepiece removed. The wearing of SCBA in these situations provides that it will be immediately available for use if conditions change or if personnel are to enter an area where the use of SCBA is required.

6. 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 until atmospheric monitoring indicates the level of carbon monoxide is below 36 PPM.
7. In routine fire situations, the decision to remove SCBA shall be made by company officers, with the approval of the Incident Commander and/or Safety Officer. Prior to removal, fire areas shall be thoroughly ventilated and, where necessary continuous ventilation shall be provided.

8. If there is any doubt about respiratory safety, SCBA use shall be maintained until the atmosphere is established to be safe by atmospheric testing. This is required in complex situations, particularly when toxic materials may be involved.

9. In situations when the atmosphere has been deemed safe to remove SCBA, consideration should be given to wearing a N95 mask to help minimize the inhalation of particulate matter. Examples of situations in which a N95 mask should be considered are:
   ▪ Visible soot in the air
   ▪ A light reflective component in the air
   ▪ Working in areas which contain large volumes of dust, ash or other particulates

10. During overhaul operations where ceilings are being pulled either an SCBA (if monitoring indicates) or the N95 mask and eye protection shall be worn by all personnel working within the area.