

To: Mayor & Council

From: Tyler Moffitt, Fire Chief/CEMC

Date: January 24, 2019

Subject: Decontamination Procedures & Washer Extractor / Dryer Equipment

Background

The Occupational Health and Safety Act Section 25 (1) (h) states that an employer shall: *take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.*

Trends – Fire services across Ontario have been implementing decontamination processes and procedures to ensure their personnel are safe and protected.

A University of Fraser Valley study found that cancer made up 86% of all firefighter workplace fatality claims. This study highlights the need for decontamination procedures to be taken seriously and for action to be taken in our workplace.

A multi-year study by NIOSH (The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) indicated that firefighters are at a higher risk of cancer than the general population by 9% and a 14% higher risk of dying of cancer.

The MOL (The Ministry of Labour) has issued a Firefighter Guidance Note on Hygiene and Decontamination.

As well, NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) and FEMSA (Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Service Association) prohibits against cleaning gear in the home or public laundries to prevent the spread of contamination.

Operational guidelines in accordance with NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) 1851, the standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Personal Protective Ensembles for Structural Firefighting and Proximity Fire Gear, will ensure the safety of our personnel.

We have Operational Guideline #200 in place, which is for Post Incident Decontamination.

As well, the practice of incorporating on scene decontamination, which involves off gassing and removing contaminated gear as soon as possible and using specialized wipes to clean the skin on scene, and then using a decontamination station to clean PPE and then shower within five hours is expected to decrease the risk of cancer, and will go a long way to ensuring our personnel, and their families are healthy and safe.

Meanwhile, I am looking to acquire a specialized front-loading washing extractor machine as soon as possible, which is designed to wash bunker gear and accessory protective equipment such as our protective hoods, gloves, and helmet liners. It has specific set programs to wash bunker gear liners and bunker gear outer shells.

I am also looking to acquire a RamAir Gear Dryer, which does not use heat to dry the gear; it uses a large volume of air, at high pressure to thoroughly dry even hard-to reach areas. This ensures the gear is completely dry before storing, thus eliminating mildew and bacteria growth.

As well, the RamAir Gear Dryer comes with 12 component ports for drying all accessories including helmets, gloves, boots, face masks and SCBA (Self Contained Breathing Apparatus).

Using a mechanical style tumble dryer can degrade the bunker gear.

Going forward, obtaining this must needed equipment will ensure our protective equipment gets correctly cleaned and dried.

In closing, I have included two attachments that will provide you information on the washer and dryer.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tyler Moffitt".

Tyler Moffitt
Fire Chief/CEMC
Fort Frances Fire & Rescue Service