

**Personal Decontamination SOG Template**

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**Please contact the Health and Safety Section for further information and resources if you have any questions.**

**Purpose**

This policy outlines the personal decontamination process required of all personnel after any fire incident where contamination occurs.

**Policy**

- A. Dermal absorption of fire contaminants is high during firefighting activity.
  - 1. Research indicates that for every 5 degrees in body temperature elevation, the skin absorbs up to 400% more contaminants.
- B. Personnel operating on fire incidents must begin personal decontamination as soon as reasonable on scene.
- C. Personal decontamination can occur throughout a fire incident and immediately after gross PPE decontamination.
- D. Personal decontamination consists of the following
  - 1. On-scene personal decontamination with decontamination wipes
  - 2. Hood exchange
  - 3. Handwashing
  - 4. Clothing change after gross decontamination
  - 5. Showering
- E. Crews are permitted to go Out of Service for showering procedures.

**Procedure**

- A. On-Scene personal decontamination
  - 1. Use department provided soap and/or decontamination wipes
  - 2. Avoid eating and/or drinking before personal decontamination
  - 3. Use decontamination wipes on all body areas, with emphasis on hands, face, neck, under-arms, and groin.
  - 4. Use as many clean new wipes as necessary
  - 5. Dermal contamination may not be visible on either the skin or the wipes
- B. Hood exchange
  - 1. After exposure to smoke and contaminants, personnel are to replace their flash hood during periods of downtime while waiting for another assignment or getting a replacement SCBA bottle.
  - 2. Before donning a new hood, use decontamination wipes to clean your hands, neck, and face.
  - 3. Engineers can proactively assist in the personal decontamination process by securing the hood exchange kit.
- C. Handwashing
  - 1. Proper handwashing prevents cross-contamination during and after firefighting operations.
  - 2. Keep your hands away from your face and mouth.
  - 3. Use department provided decontamination soaps and/or wipes

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4. Clothing change after gross decontamination
  5. All personnel are to keep a clean change of clothes (class B, C, or D) on the apparatus to change into after gross and personal decontamination.
- D. Showering
1. The most important component in the personal decontamination process.
  2. Contaminated crews are to remain out of service for “fire decon.”
  3. Chief and company officers have the authority to send crews back to quarters to shower.
  4. All crews are to shower immediately upon return to the station.
  5. Use department-provided decontamination soap and shower for 10 minutes.
  6. Apparatus and equipment rehabilitation are secondary to personnel showering.

For additional information, see:

**San Diego County Operational Area Policy# 19-A Decontamination**