**Purpose:**

Smoke and contaminants present a hazard to members involved in the investigation of fires. Adequate respiratory protection must be provided to ensure the safety of members during such investigation.

**Scope:**

Fire Department members.

**Policy:**

Suitable respiratory protection must be worn by Fire Department service members during all investigations to determine the cause and origins of fires. (Occupational exposure control to hazards including contaminants, oxygen deficient atmospheres, IDLH atmospheres in order to meet Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Parts 6, 8 & 31).

**Procedures:**

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) must be worn by all members during all fire investigations.  
  
SCBA shall be worn and used by all members when:

* Entering confined or restricted spaces that are oxygen deficient; or, where smoke, chemicals, toxic agents, toxic fumes or unknown type gases or vapors are present,
* At the scene of an emergency incident where members may be exposed to toxic vapors, gases, fumes, mist, or dust caused by fires, explosions, leaks, spills, or other means,
* Where the atmosphere is known to be or suspected to be hazardous.

Where the atmosphere may become hazardous

* Members shall resist the tendency to prematurely remove breathing apparatus during routine fire situations. All Firefighters and Fire Investigators must be aware of respiratory hazards which exist in ordinary as well as extraordinary fire situations. It is generally true that carbon monoxide levels increase during overhaul due to the incomplete combustion of smoldering materials.
* All members shall be given a minimum of 30-minutes rest period after using two bottles of air.
* When working in a breathing apparatus working in pairs is considered a good practice.
* Never remove the facemask or regulator to talk when in a hazardous atmosphere
* All members are directly responsible for their personal safety and shall utilize and maintain Self Contained Breathing Apparatus in accordance with this Operational Guideline.
* If conditions at the investigation scene deteriorate or difficulties arise with equipment use, the investigator(s) must evacuate the fire area until adequate safety with the use of the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus can be restored.
* Half masks and N95 masks are not acceptable to use for fire investigation.

**References:**

WorkSafe OH&S Reg 31.19-26, NFPA 1001, 1033, 1500, CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z94.4-93 Selection, Use and Care of Respirators