



**GLASTONBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**



SOG NUMBER: FDO-116 ISSUED DATE: 11-15-11 EFFECTIVE DATE: 11-15-11
REVISION #: 1 REVISED DATE: 01-11-16 EFFECTIVE DATE: 01-11-16
CATEGORY: EMERGENCY OPERATIONS - GENERAL
SUB-CATEGORY: DEPARTMENT DIRECTIVE
SUBJECT: FACIAL HAIR
RELATED GUIDELINES: FDO-113; FDO-114; FDO-115

Section I – Introduction

A. Objective

To ensure a proper seal of the SCBA face mask as described in the OSHA standards.

B. Applicability

To all department members certified as interior firefighters. Those exempt from this requirement are Support and Fire Police members only.

C. References

Occupational Health and Safety Administration's respirator standard: 29 CFR 1910.134(g) (1) (i-iii) and has been adopted by the Glastonbury Fire Department.

Section II – Federal OSHA Respirator Standard

1. OSHA's respiratory protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134) specifies certain requirements and employer is required to follow when their employees must wear respirators.
2. The standard states that the employer cannot permit respirators with tight-fitting face pieces to be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face, or that interferes with valve function.
3. The standard requires the employer to ensure that those employees that have facial hair and who are required to wear tight-fitting face pieces trim their beards so that they do not interfere with the sealing surface of the respirator or are not so large that they could interfere with valve function.
4. There are several published studies which indicate that individuals with facial hair do not obtain a satisfactory face piece seal on a tight fitting face piece because the growth, texture and density of beards varies around the face.

5. While an individual may obtain an acceptable face piece fit on any given day, that individual may not be able to achieve a consistent satisfactory fit on a daily basis, no matter whether the face piece is of paper, fabric, plastic or rubber material.
6. Thus an employer using a respirator to protect an employee with a growth of beard where the seal is compromised by the beard growth is violating [29 CFS 1910.134(g) (1) (i) (A)].

Section III – Glastonbury Fire Department Respirator Standard

The Glastonbury Fire Department has adopted the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulation, 29 CFR [1910, 134(g) (1) (i-iii)] and the safe use of a respirator.

1. All respirators must be properly fitted.
2. Respirators shall be worn when present conditions have been identified as an IDLH atmosphere.
3. Whenever a respirator is worn, proper precautions must be exercised to insure that the wearer is protected against overexposure to toxic air contaminants.
4. This regulation does not differentiate whether the respirator is worn routinely or occasionally.
5. The Fire Department will not permit respirators with tight-fitting face pieces to be worn by any individual who has:
 - a. Facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face or that interferes with valve function; or
 - b. Any condition that interferes with the face-to-face piece seal or valve function.
 - c. Firefighters that maintain mustaches are to be trimmed, tapered and tidy. Mustaches will not present a chopped off or bushy appearance and no portion of the mustache will cover the upper lip line or extend beyond the crease in an individual's chin.
 - d. Handlebar mustaches, goatees and beards are prohibited.
4. This requirement applies to both negative and/or positive pressure respiratory protective devices that rely on the principle of forming a face to face piece seal.
5. Positive pressure-type respirators can have leakage paths which can cause aspiration of the outside atmosphere.
6. With self-contained breathing apparatus, high leakage will markedly reduce the service life of the tank.
7. Beard growth at points where the seal with the face and respirator occurs is a condition that has been shown by numerous studies to prevent a good face seal.
8. Research has demonstrated that even modest facial hair growth can have a significant adverse impact on the protection of a positive pressure system.
9. Thus using a respirator to protect a firefighter with growth of beard where the seal is compromised by the beard growth is violating [29 CFR 1910.134(g) (1) (i) (A)].

Section III- Approval

Fire Chief Michael P. King

Date of Approval: 1/11/16