PURPOSE: It is the policy of the North Kingstown Fire Department that all members expected to respond and function in areas of atmospheric contamination be equipped with a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and trained in its proper use, care, inspection, and maintenance.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure members are familiar with the proper use and function of all SCBAs on all apparatus and mandate the use of SCBA to prevent injury or death to firefighters operating in LDLH atmospheres.

INTENT: To avoid any respiratory contact with products of combustion, super-heated gases, toxic products or other hazardous contaminants through the proper care and use of SCBAs.

SCBA ***shall*** be worn at the following type incidents:

- Fires
- Structure Fires
- Vehicle Fires
- Oxygen deficient / enriched atmospheres (<19.5% or 23%>)
- Suspected hazardous materials incidents
- Anytime available air quality is questionable
- Chemical, Radiological, Biological, or Nuclear Incidents
- Investigations of any of the above

OPERATIONS: SCBA ***shall*** be used by all personnel operating in an atmosphere that is or may be:

- Contaminated
- Oxygen deficient

This includes all personnel operating:

- In an active fire area (excluding most wildfire and natural vegetation fires)
- Directly above an active fire area

- In a potential explosion area, including gas leaks and fuel spills
- Where invisible contaminants are suspected to be present (i.e Carbon Monoxide incident(s), overhaul, etc.)
- Where toxic products are present, suspected to be present, or may be released without warning in any confined space which has not been tested to establish respiratory safety.

Personnel shall achieve a non-leaking *facepiece to skin seal* with the mask. Facial hair shall not be allowed at points where the SCBA facepiece is designed to seal with the face. Individual members shall be accountable for compliance with this requirement.

Company officers/acting officers shall assure that each SCBA is checked 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 assigned personal facepiece when issued.

If a SCBA is found to be functioning improperly, it shall be taken out of service, reported, and replaced immediately.

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 immediately be available for use should conditions change or if personnel are to enter an area where the use of SCBA is required.

In routine fire situations, the decision to remove SCBA shall be made by company officers with the approval of the Shift Commander, based on an evaluation of atmospheric conditions. Prior

to removal, fire areas shall be thoroughly ventilated and when necessary continuous ventilation provided.

DEFINITIONS:

Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA): Device worn by rescue workers, firefighters, and others to provide breathable air in an "Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health" atmosphere (IDLH).