

# Appendix

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**PSFA**

**10-Year Rule**

**Gear Rule**



**Pennsylvania State Fire Academy  
Office of State Fire Commissioner**

### 10-Year Rule for Turn-Out Gear

At the Educational Training Agency meeting on November 16, 2012, a discussion was held regarding the hotly debated 2008 edition and the proposed 2013 edition of the NFPA 1851: Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting. The Standard requires fire departments remove any gear from service that has a manufacture date more than 10 years old. Gear subject to this requirement includes garments, hoods, gloves, boots and helmets.

Without substantial documentation/data to determine the actual service life of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and to justify the replacement of PPE that varies with the amount of use, care and condition, it is impractical for the State Fire Academy (SFA) to mandate fire departments adhere to this standard and arbitrarily replace PPE that is more than 10 years old.

To provide direction for all training organizations within the Commonwealth, please adhere to the following policies regarding a minimum standard for the use of PPE for fire training/certification.

- 1) Accredited SFA local-level instructors will continue the practice of inspecting gear used for **non-suppression** training/classes to determine if the gear is in a serviceable (no missing parts) and safe condition. The standard permits continued use of aged gear (i.e., retired structural fire fighting ensembles and elements for training that does not involve live fire). The gear is not required to be marked as “being for non-live fire training only”.
- 2) Accredited SFA local-level instructors will continue the practice of inspecting and documenting gear used for **suppression** (live fire) training/classes to determine if the gear is in a serviceable (no missing parts) and safe condition. The instructor(s) shall sign the “PA SFA Personal Protective Equipment Inspection Checklist” (see attached) that attests each firefighting ensemble was inspected before any live fire training/class. Any gear that is contaminated, defective or damaged shall not be permitted for Structural or live firefighting training.
- 3) Fire departments as the “authority having jurisdiction” (AHJ) should develop their own specific criteria for when and how they retire PPE.
- 4) Educational Training Agencies can adopt a more stringent policy as long as that policy is communicated to the AHJ and the students.

This decision is based on our best interpretation of available information balanced against the potential impact of this NFPA Standard on the Pennsylvania Fire Service. We will continue to monitor fire training across the Commonwealth and if conditions (incidents/injuries) that directly relate to the performance of the gear manifest, then the SFA in consultation with the PA Fire Service will revisit this policy and the applicable standard.

Please feel free to contact George Stapleton, State Fire Academy Administrator with any additional questions.