



The Training Brief

Quick Reference mini-training Topics Cleaning your Fire Helmet

The purpose of this training topic is to understand the scope of the occupational cancer and the importance of cleaning your fire helmet.

Discussion

Fact: Firefighters have a **9 percent higher risk** of being diagnosed with cancer and a **14 percent higher risk** of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population, according to research by the CDC/National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH).

Cleaning PPE including your fire helmet is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk to contaminants.

Key Points: Soot covered PPE including a fire helmet is no longer considered a badge of honor. It is now known as a cancer-causing element where firefighters are needlessly exposed to toxicants that can cause cancer.

Action: Clean all PPE including your helmet per manufactures and NFPA 1851 guidelines. Doing so will reduce your exposure to toxicants known to cause cancer.

Ensure you follow manufactures recommendations for cleaning your helmet.

Make the necessary changes

For many years Firefighters throughout the United States have considered their seasoned or dirty helmet as a badge of honor.

A Clean helmets and turnouts were for the rookie or when one had to get a replacement set of PPE.

We know now that dirty or contaminated PPE can off gas and needlessly expose firefighters to PAH's (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons.)

This kind of exposure puts (firefighters) at higher risk for cancer.

Cleaning your fire helmet on a consistent basis is important way to cut your exposure to cancer causing contaminants. In addition to reducing your risk a clean helmet can also prolong the life of the helmet.

Below you will find a brief general cleaning method fore most fire helmets:

- 1. Use a cloth or brush, damp from a mixture of water and mild detergent. Wipe down all exposed surfaces of the helmet.*
- 2. While cleaning, look for cracks, bubbling, or deep scratches.*
- 3. Remove the helmet liner. Clean the liner using the detergent and water mixture and agitate the liner till clean. If your department has a liner replacement program, simply replace it.*
- 4. Take a soft dry towel and wipe the helmet and liner dry.*
- 5. Hang to dry completely in a shaded area.*

As always, follow your specific departments standards and procedures for cleaning your helmet.

It is recommended to follow NFPA 1851 guideline for cleaning PPE after each use or exposed to products of combustion.

Below you will find two hyperlinks for videos on the proper way to clean your helmet from two different manufacturers. Please take a few minutes to review the video from the manufacturer of your specific helmet. If your helmet manufacturer is not listed below, we encourage you to look for information from the manufacturer:

Phenix Fire Helmet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uuCYeRrADQc>

MSA Fire Helmet:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w23_D2F4_xk

Lion Academy NFPA 1851:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZ8Yh3wCmFg&feature=youtu.be>