



# Texas Commission on Fire Protection

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## PPE Selection, Care & Maintenance Guide — NFPA 1850 (2026)

### 1. Understand the Standard's Structure

NFPA 1850-2026 is organized to cover PPE programs holistically — from administrative setup to retirement of gear:

- **Chapters 1–3** — Administration, references, definitions.
- **Chapters 4–13** — Protective ensembles (turnout gear, helmets, gloves, footwear) **selection, care, and maintenance**, including cleaning, inspection, repair, storage, retirement, and ISP verification.
- **Chapters 14–17** — SCBA program and respiratory equipment selection, care, and maintenance.
- **Annexes** — Risk assessment guidance and roles (PPC Manager/Technician).

### 2. Program Organization & Management

#### Establish a PPE Program

- **Document a formal PPE program** that defines roles, responsibilities, and procedures.
- **Assign a Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) Manager** — oversees the entire PPE lifecycle: procurement, cleaning, storage, inspection, repairs, and recordkeeping.
- **Train PPC Technicians** — personnel trained in advanced inspection, cleaning, and repairs per NFPA criteria.
- Ensure all personnel understand their duties and reporting requirements.

### 3. PPE Selection

#### Selection & Risk Assessment

- Conduct a **hazard/risk assessment** before buying PPE, considering the types of responses your department handles (structural fire, proximity fire, hazardous materials).



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- Evaluate PPE **certified to NFPA 1970/1971** for appropriate tasks; confirm certification markings and performance criteria.
- Consider **ergonomics, compatibility, fit, interface between elements (helmets, gloves, coats, pants, boots, hoods)**, and performance in real operations.
- Incorporate restricted substance and contaminant considerations into your selection SOPs.

### 4. Cleaning and Decontamination

#### Preliminary Exposure Reduction (PER)

- After fire responses where gear is soiled, perform **on-scene PER**: rinse gear with low-pressure water and light scrubbing to remove surface contaminants before transport.
- Bag contaminated gear to reduce cross-contamination in vehicles or stations.

#### Advanced & Specialized Cleaning

- Define **advanced cleaning procedures** in SOPs; this includes washer/extractor use with appropriate detergents and temperatures per NFPA guidelines.
- Gear should undergo **advanced cleaning at least twice a year** or more often if heavily contaminated.
- Specialized cleaning may be required for unusual contaminants (hazmat events, lithium battery fires, etc.), with documented decision criteria.

**Tip:** Manufacturers and ISPs must verify that their cleaning processes don't degrade PPE performance. Record water handling and wastewater management may also be regulated.

### 5. Routine and Advanced Inspection

#### Routine Inspection

- Members must inspect their PPE **before and after every use** for wear, contamination, damage, or compromised components.
- If a routine inspection finds issues, initiate an **advanced inspection**.



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## Advanced Inspection

- Conducted by trained PPC Technicians, manufacturers, or verified Independent Service Providers (ISPs).
- Includes detailed assessment of liners, shells, interfaces, hardware, SCBA facepieces, and breathing systems.

## 6. Repair and Maintenance

- Define repair scopes and **authorized personnel** who can perform them (manufacturers, verified ISPs, trained technicians).
- Ensure repairs meet NFPA criteria so that protective performance is maintained.
- Track all repairs in your PPE records.

## 7. Storage and Handling

- Store clean, dry PPE in **designated, ventilated areas** away from UV, heat, and chemicals.
- Transport contaminated gear in **sealed containers or bags** to prevent cross-contamination.
- Do not store gear in passenger compartments without appropriate containment.

## 8. Retirement and Disposition

- Establish criteria for **retirement** of PPE components based on service life, damage, contamination, or test failures.
- Properly **dispose** of retired elements in a way that they cannot be used again.
- Update inventories and records accordingly.

## 9. Verification & Quality Assurance

- Document and verify that **cleaning facilities, detergents, and methods** meet NFPA performance criteria.
- If using external ISPs, ensure they are **verified per NFPA 1850** requirements.
- Keep quality records and verification certificates.



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### 10. Documentation & Recordkeeping

Maintain detailed records for all PPE elements:

- **Issue logs** — who the gear is assigned to.
- **Inspection logs** — routine and advanced inspection outcomes.
- **Cleaning and repair history.**
- **Retirement records.**
- **Verification certificates for cleaning partners and PPE technicians.**
- Standardize forms and retention policies to satisfy NFPA documentation requirements.

### Practical Implementation Checklist

- ✓ Establish PPE program & assign PPC roles
- ✓ Risk assessment for PPE selection
- ✓ Written SOPs for cleaning, inspection, repair, storage, retirement
- ✓ Training on NFPA 1850 requirements for members and technicians
- ✓ Approved cleaning and verification processes in place
- ✓ Comprehensive recordkeeping system
- ✓ Schedule reviews and updates annually