



Texas Commission on Fire Protection

P.O. Box 2286, Austin, Texas 78701-2286

PH# 512-936-3838

Website: www.tcfp.texas.gov

Email: info@tcfp.texas.gov

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

1. Establish the Respiratory Protection Program (Chapter 14)

Goal: Create, document, and implement a written respiratory protection program that covers all SCBA selection, care, and maintenance activities.

What to Include

- **Program scope and authority:** Define who is responsible for SCBA program oversight (department safety officer or respiratory protection manager).
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Document processes for **selection, inspection, cleaning, maintenance, storage, cylinder filling/requalification, contamination control, and retirement** of SCBA.
- **Adverse condition reporting:** SOPs for reporting **failure, near-failure, or significant degradation** of SCBA or components, including:
 - Immediate **removal from service**.
 - **Securing and restricting access** to the affected SCBA.
 - **Documenting the chain of custody**.
- **Contamination policies:** Procedures to minimize exposure to contaminated SCBA after use.

2. SCBA Selection Requirements (Chapter 15)

Goal: Acquire SCBA that are appropriate for the hazards your personnel will face.

Key Actions

- **Perform a risk assessment** before purchasing SCBA to identify operational hazards and required performance criteria.
- Ensure SCBA are **certified to NFPA 1981** (current or earlier approved editions as allowed) and compatible with your department's response needs.
- Conduct **acceptance testing** on new SCBA prior to placing them in service to confirm:



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- Proper function of regulators, alarms, and gauges.
- Interface fit with PPE (helmets, hoods, etc.).

3. SCBA Care and Cleaning (Chapter 16)

Goal: Maintain SCBA hygiene and prevent contamination spread while preserving performance.

Routine Care Actions

- **User cleaning:** After each use, SCBA components such as facepiece, hoses, and harness should be wiped down and disinfected per SOPs to remove gross contamination.
- **Preliminary exposure reduction:** If SCBA was used in highly contaminated environments (smoke, products of combustion), implement on-scene reduction steps similar to PPE PER to reduce surface contamination prior to transport.
- **Advanced cleaning:** Periodically deeper cleaning and disinfecting per manufacturer and SOP guidance.
- **Specialized cleaning:** Defined procedures for unusual contaminants (hazmat exposures) that exceed normal advanced cleaning criteria.
- **Storage care:** SCBA must be stored clean, dry, and protected from contaminants between uses.
- Ensure **contamination control** protocols to prevent cross-contamination in apparatus bays and care areas.

4. SCBA Maintenance Activities (Chapter 17)

Goal: Keep SCBA in reliable working order through proper maintenance and testing.

User and Technician Maintenance

- **User maintenance:**
 - Quick inspection and basic checks by the user at the start and end of each shift.
 - Confirm cylinder pressure, alarm functions, and overall cleanliness.
- **Technician maintenance:**
 - Detailed inspections and servicing performed by **qualified personnel** (SCBA technicians trained/authorized by the manufacturer).
 - Includes disassembly, cleaning, part replacement, and function testing.



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- Follow **manufacturer maintenance schedules** and NFPA SOPs.

Cylinder Handling & Testing

- **Cylinder filling:** Documented procedures for filling SCBA cylinders with breathing air meeting applicable respiratory protection standards.
- **Cylinder requalification:** Cylinders must be requalified per regulatory and NFPA procedures at prescribed intervals.
- **Testing:** Periodic functional tests to ensure regulators, alarms (EOSTI), and gauges meet performance criteria.

5. Recordkeeping & Documentation

Goal: Maintain complete records for compliance, safety oversight, and historical reference.

- **Inspection logs:** Track routine checks and advanced inspections.
- **Cleaning history:** Document cleaning type (user, advanced, specialized), dates, and personnel performing it.
- **Maintenance records:** Document all maintenance and repairs, including parts replaced and test results.
- **Cylinder records:** Filling, hydrostatic tests, and requalification certificates.
- **Adverse condition documentation:** Record events triggering removal from service and corrective actions taken.

6. SCBA Retirement & Disposal

Goal: Retire SCBA when they no longer provide adequate protection.

- SCBA that can no longer be upgraded to the required safety performance levels or that fail inspections/testing must be **retired and properly disposed**.
- Follow documented criteria in SOPs referencing NFPA expectations for retirement timelines and permissible extension scenarios via manufacturer upgrades.
- Incorporate a clear **disposition process** to ensure retired SCBA are not accidentally returned to service.



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7. Training

Goal: Ensure all personnel understand their roles in the SCBA program.

- Train members on:
 - The **respiratory protection program and SOPs**.
 - Proper **donning/doffing**, inspection, cleaning, and basic maintenance tasks.
 - Reporting procedures for **adverse conditions**.
- Provide **advanced training** for technicians authorized to perform detailed maintenance and repairs.
- Update training regularly and when SOPs change.

8. Program Review & Audit

Goal: Periodically evaluate the program's effectiveness.

- Conduct **annual audits** of records, procedures, and compliance with NFPA 1850 SCBA sections.
- Update SOPs based on lessons learned, incident reviews, new equipment, or changes in NFPA guidance.
- Engage manufacturers or consultants for third-party review of program compliance and performance as needed.

Summary Checklist

| Category | Required Action |
|---------------|--|
| Program | Written respiratory protection program (Chapter 14) |
| Selection | Risk assessment and documented acceptance testing (Chapter 15) |
| Care | Routine cleaning and contamination controls (Chapter 16) |
| Maintenance | User and technician maintenance; cylinder requalification (Chapter 17) |
| Documentation | Comprehensive recordkeeping |
| Retirement | Defined criteria for SCBA retirement |
| Training | Initial and ongoing training |
| Audit | Annual program review |