



# TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION

Post Office Box 2286, Austin, Texas 78768-2286 512-936-3838 Fax: 512-936-3808

Website: [www.tcfp.texas.gov](http://www.tcfp.texas.gov) Email: [info@tcfp.texas.gov](mailto:info@tcfp.texas.gov)

To: All Fire Chiefs and Heads of Departments of Regulated Fire Departments

From: Tim Rutland, Executive Director, Texas Commission on Fire Protection

Date: March 10, 2015 (Updated 10/29/2015)

Subject: Risk Assessment for Selection of Structure and Proximity Protective Clothing

Recently, several Aircraft Rescue/Fire Fighting (ARFF) organizations approached the Commission about its practice regarding the requirement for ARFF personnel to be issued proximity fire fighting ensembles. The organizations felt that the current edition of NFPA 1851 allows them to conduct a risk assessment to determine whether their crews should be issued structural or proximity ensembles (or both). In response, the Commissioners directed that a work group be formed to study the issue and report back with recommendations, which it did in the January 2015 Commission meeting. As a result of the work group recommendations, the Commissioners determined that organizations should indeed perform a risk assessment to determine the type of gear worn by personnel, and directed that staff work with departments throughout the state in the accomplishment of the assessments.

The Commissioners directed that:

1. Per NFPA 1851 guidelines, **all departments** are to perform a risk assessment for their organization (not just ARFF organizations or divisions). The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that departments are outfitting their personnel with protective ensembles (structural, proximity, or both) appropriate for the duties being performed.
2. Risk assessments are to be completed no later than **2/28/2017** or prior to the selection of new gear if a department is considering switching from proximity to structural firefighting ensembles, whichever occurs first (see the "FAQ" document in the information packet for more details).
3. A completed risk assessment shall be approved by the head of the fire department.
4. Commission staff is to assist fire departments by providing guidance and informational material regarding risk assessments.

The staff at TCFP has developed an "information packet" to assist fire departments in the completion of their risk assessments. Included in the packet is an FAQ document, several sample "templates" for risk assessment documents, and other guidance.

The information packet is available on the Commission's home page under the "Compliance" link at the top of the page, or you can contact your compliance officer to obtain the packet.

If you haven't already done a formal risk assessment for your department, the process may at first seem like a monumental task. But in reality most departments have already done it: You know the types of incidents your personnel are likely to encounter; you have trained on strategy and tactics for various types of hazards; you have the big picture for your community.....now it is simply a matter of formalizing the process.....getting it "down on paper". At the same time, the process may give you the opportunity to consider some things that you hadn't before: particular target hazards, that possible incident on the nearby interstate, another look at your strategy in a particular type of situation. In the end, the process will surely prove beneficial to you and to the safety of your personnel. Let us know if you need anything as you work through it.