



# Safety Brief

JCFPD Training Division

2011-October

2011-10



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## Firefighting Hoods

Some members of JCFPD are old enough to remember fighting structural fires when firefighting hoods were not a standard part of the personal protection equipment ensemble. It used to be said that firefighters could determine the fire conditions by sensing the heat on our necks and ears. It was claimed that "feeling the heat" provided a margin of safety by letting firefighters know when they should move back to a safer and cooler position. But were the old days really all that good?

Today, we know that firefighters who have been properly trained can identify fire conditions without exposing the body to injury. This is one reason for participating in live fire training exercises!

### Hazards for Firefighters

Those of us who are 'old-timers' remember that the gap between the ear flaps on the fire helmet and the turned-up collar of the turnout coat resulted in many types of burns to the neck and ears. These burns included:

- Thermal burns resulting from radiant heat;
- Steam burns caused by fog streams introduced into high temperature environments; and
- Contact burns caused by dripping hot tar, embers, and hot debris falling inside the collar.

The firefighting hood is so closely associated with protection against burns that we often forget that the firefighting hood is quite useful to protect firefighters against cold injuries, too.

### Avoiding Injury

The firefighting hood, like other parts of our protective clothing ensemble, only works when we take the time to don the equipment and properly wear it during firefighting. Firefighters should think about the order in which gear is put on so that donning times can be improved. Many firefighters carry their hoods in a pants

pocket, so pants and boots are put on first, followed by the hood.

When placed over the head, the hood should be pulled down onto the neck immediately to leave room for putting on the SCBA facepiece. The coat should then be donned, making sure that the flaps of the hood are spread out over the shoulders, chest, and back underneath the coat. The flaps of the hood should not be left outside the coat or over the collar of the coat.



After the SCBA facepiece is put on and the straps are tightened, the firefighting hood is then pulled up over the top of the head. The opening of the hood should be placed over the SCBA facepiece so that no skin or hair is left exposed. The ear flaps of the helmet should be pulled down and the coat collar turned up to provide an overlap with the hood before entering a structural fire.

Experienced firefighters have also learned that the firefighting hood, designed for structural fire attack, is also useful when fighting grass and brush fires. Working close to the fireline can expose the body to embers and sparks. Even if the turnout coat is not worn due to weight issues, the hood can be an important asset. As mentioned earlier, cold temperatures often encourage firefighters to don the firefighting hood during non-fire emergencies. The same qualities that keep away from the skin will also help keep the body warm.

The firefighting hood should be regularly inspected. When the elastic around the face opening is worn out, the hood should be replaced. Multi-layer hoods should also be replaced when one or more layers are burned through or torn.

### Protect Yourself

Firefighting hoods must be taken out of the pocket and properly worn to provide thermal protection. Remember to inspect your hood regularly and report damaged PPE to your station officers for prompt replacement. Stay safe!







# Safety Brief

JCFPD Training Division

2011-December

2011-12



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## Safely Operating POVs

District firefighters respond to their station when alerted of an emergency in their response area. Wet and slippery pavement, gravel surfaces, curves, and hills present challenges for safe operations during normal driving. Safe operation of privately-owned vehicles (POVS) protects firefighters, the District, and the public from unnecessary accidents and injuries. Firefighters should review District policies and state laws to remain compliant with these rules and regulations.

JCFPD Policy 1995-001 describes the District's policies on using emergency warning equipment on POVs. Only personnel who have been issued a permit by the Chief may utilize emergency warning equipment. This policy also references Missouri state laws on the use of emergency warning equipment on POVs. Additionally, JCFPD Guideline 2004-002 provides guidance for operating District vehicles and POVs safely during emergency responses.

### Hazards for Firefighters

Missouri state law (304.022 RSMo and 307.175) allow a fire chief to issue a permit authorizing members of the District to operate POVs as emergency vehicles. However, there are restrictions associated with operating a POV as an emergency vehicle. These restrictions include:

- The permit issued by the chief must be located within the vehicle;
- An audible siren and flashing or rotating blue lights must be utilized; and
- The firefighter must be responding to a bona fide emergency.

The state law allows firefighters operating POVs as emergency vehicles to park or stand in places not normally allowed. In addition, a POV operating as an emergency vehicle may:

- Proceed past a red light or stop sign after slowing down as needed for safe operation;
- Exceed the posted speed limit as long as life or property are not endangered, and
- Go the wrong way on a one-way street.

District policies and guidelines can be more restrictive than state law. Our District policy requires that operators of POVS may NOT operate a vehicle in "careless, imprudent, or other reckless driving practices...whether emergency equipment is in use or not" (P1995-001). The use of emergency warning equipment is limited to the boundaries of the fire district, unless otherwise authorized by the Chief. All firefighters must maintain liability insurance on their POVs in order to obtain a permit from the Chief to utilize emergency warning equipment. District policy prohibits passing on the right.

### Avoiding Injury

District policy requires that "all emergency responses shall be made with concern for existing conditions including pedestrians, weather, road conditions, and other vehicles" (P1995-001). Intersections are where many accidents occur, so District policy states "travel through any controlled intersection shall be done with extreme caution and only when all conditions permit safe passage" (P1995-001). This may require that firefighters come to a complete stop before proceeding through the intersection to avoid collisions.

Firefighters are restricted from responding to emergency incidents or training activities while under the influence of alcohol or drugs (P2002-002). Additionally, firefighters using prescription drugs should be aware of any restrictions or side effects that impair their ability to operate safely.

POVs without emergency warning lights and sirens must operate as a normal vehicle on the road. Normal driving regulations apply. POVs without lights must yield to emergency vehicles, including firefighters operating POVs with lights and sirens. Do NOT follow emergency vehicles during a response; allow them to pass and then resume normal driving. When responding to an emergency scene in a POV, it is important to check in with the incident commander and turn in your accountability tag before participating in firefighting activities.

### Protect Yourself

Think about safety while driving. You can reduce vehicle accidents by operating POVs safely.



# Safety Brief

JCFPD Training Division

2011-February

2011-2



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## Slips, Trips, and Falls

Injuries resulting from slips, trips, and falls are a significant source of fireground injuries. Since 1990, these injuries have been either the first- or second-most common cause of firefighter injuries. A Canadian study indicated that 16% of firefighter injuries on the fireground are caused by slips, trips, and falls, but result in 25% of all lost-time injuries. Actual injuries are probably higher, because most firefighters probably underreport minor injuries related to falls. In addition to fireground injuries, slips, trips, and falls can occur at non-emergency incidents and inside and outside the fire station.

### Hazards for Firefighters

In 2008, Brad Hubbard (a former JCFPD officer) reported in a *Fire Engineering* article that weather, wet walking surfaces, and uneven work surfaces contribute to the high rate of slips, trips, and falls. Additionally, firefighters often operate with limited visibility, due to fire conditions and the use of SCBA facemasks. Finally, worn boot treads reduce the grip on the walking surface.

A recent study suggests that PPE also affects a firefighter's ability to operate safely on the fireground by affecting natural balance and walking patterns. While we often recognize that PPE affects our core body temperature and increases fatigue, we usually don't consider that PPE affects our balance and ability to walk safely. As a result of this study, we must recognize that PPE affects firefighter safety during all activities where PPE is worn, including non-fire responses, such as MVAs, investigations, and even training activities.

## Avoiding Injury

Firefighters and officers must constantly assess operations to reduce slips, trips, and falls. At the station, hazards can usually be eliminated through effective housekeeping. Spills should be cleaned up promptly, walking surfaces should be free of obstructions, and lighting should provide sufficient illumination. During winter, snow should be removed promptly, and ice treated to ensure safe walking surfaces. Slips and falls can also occur when mounting apparatus. Firefighters must use handholds and place their boots completely on the apparatus step to operate safely.



On the fireground, firefighters and officers should be aware of slip, trip, and fall hazards. Upon arrival at the scene, dismounting the vehicle presents challenges. Use handholds, and remember that roadside ditches are often quite deep. During fire suppression activities, wet surfaces caused by weather or firefighting water can be slippery. Fill sites, dump sites, and leaking couplings can

create slipping hazards. Operating from ladders reduces the area of boot-surface contact, increasing the likelihood of slips. During winter weather, operations may have to move at a slower pace to provide a safety margin for firefighters.

Roof activities are especially dangerous. The pitch of the roof compromises walking safety, especially when wet or snow-covered. The edge of the roof is a hazard, and firefighters may not be able to see that edge due to smoke or fogged facepieces. If firefighters lose their footing, a fall to the ground can result.

### Protect Yourself

While firefighting equipment may contribute to poor balance, firefighters remain responsible for minimizing slips, trips, and falls. You can assess walking surfaces for hazards and modify firefighting activities to operate safely.







# Safety Brief

JCFPD Training Division

2011-May

2011-5



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## Water Supply Operations

Every fire to which we respond requires that we establish a water supply. Water supply operations present multiple hazards for firefighters to protect against.

### Hazards for Firefighters

Pressurized water supply operations present hazards for firefighters to consider. First, connecting hoselines to hydrants allows pressurized water to flow into our engines and tankers. Hoses can fail, which is why we test hose on an annual basis. Hoses should be connected carefully, avoiding cross-threading. After the fire, traffic should be controlled to allow supply hose to be picked up safely. Reloading hose on engines should minimize the possibility of falls from the hosebed or tailboard.

Water supply operations utilizing portable tanks can also be dangerous. As tankers arrive on the scene, firefighters need to find safe locations to place portable tanks. While portable tanks need to be placed close the drafting engine, consider leaving enough room between the tank and the engine to open compartment doors safely. Additionally, traffic near the dump site may need to be restricted to provide a safe space for firefighters to work.

Portable tanks are heavy. Use several firefighters to remove a portable tank from the tanker to reduce back strains. Carrying the tank from the tanker to the point of use can also be challenging, as the ground is often uneven and the scene may not have sufficient lighting at this point in time. Portable tanks are collapsible, so there are several pinch points that need to be considered. When opening the tank frame, pinch points can be found where the hinges move to the closed position as the frame straightens. As the tank is closed, pinch points exist where hinges collapse.

Tankers operate close to firefighters as they maneuver to dump water into portable tanks.

Firefighters operating near the dump tank must be aware of moving vehicles. Every tanker backing into the dump site must have a dismounted guide to control the tanker and move pedestrians out of the way. The firefighter backing the tanker must avoid placing their body in the pinch point between moving tankers and portable tanks. When backing the tanker, always leave an escape route in case the tanker cannot stop.

Fill sites present similar hazards for firefighters. There will be moving vehicles as tankers arrive and leave from the fill site. Additionally, some fill sites will be exposed to normal traffic flow. There may be slip/trip/fall hazards as the ground can be uneven and poorly lit. When filling brush trucks with tankers, firefighters may have to climb onto the brush truck and hold hoselines in place. Use low pressure when filling brush trucks in this manner. When hydrants are utilized, all of the hazards of pressurized water supplies will be present.



### Avoiding Injury

Firefighters working on water supply operations should wear all issued personal protective equipment. Boots help provide safe footing, gloves can protect hands from pinch points, coats and traffic vests make firefighters more visible, and helmets protect heads from impact injuries.

Traffic patterns need to be controlled. Civilian traffic may need to be stopped or re-routed. Tanker movement at dump and fill sites must be controlled by firefighters on the ground who will ensure that no one gets run over. Climbing on tankers and brush trucks must be done carefully, using handholds and safe footing.

### Protect Yourself

Every fire requires a water supply operation. Consider the hazards that are present and take precautions to minimize injuries.



# Safety Brief

JCFPD Training Division

2011-June

2011-6



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## Cooling for Hot Weather

Firefighters know that hot weather makes firefighting more difficult. The issue of hot weather firefighting has been addressed in previous issues (see July 2008 and May 2009). Thanks to the Johnson County Fire Auxiliary, JCFPD now has new equipment to help us deal with hot weather firefighting.

### Hazards for Firefighters

Hot weather, combined with PPE, exertion, and the heat of the fire, combine to raise the core body temperature of firefighters. We have used fans in the past to try to cool bodies stressed by firefighting in hot weather. But adding a fine mist of cool water to moving air helps lower the core body temperature even faster. We have seen misters at work on the sidelines of football games for many years!

### Avoiding Injury

The Johnson County Fire Auxiliary has provided cooling misters to firefighters in several districts in the county. The equipment provided to JCFPD is currently installed on engines at Station 1, Station 5, and Station 10. Additional units will soon be placed on engines at Station 7 and Station 9. If your engine does not have a mister, and the Incident Commander is concerned about hot weather, an engine can be requested with this equipment. Additionally, Air 308 also has awnings which can be used to provide shade at emergency scenes.

The equipment is easy to recognize—just look for the large red mesh bag. Inside are two long PVC pipes, along with four short pieces and a brass fitting. (See the pictures on the back of this *Safety*

*Brief* and included in this month's District Training.)



To set up the mister, first insert the four short pieces of pipe into the cross piece of one long pipe. This provides the base for the mister. Next, install the second long pipe into the base piece. You now have a mister that is about six feet tall.

The next step is to install the brass fitting on the base piece. You will notice that there is a directional arrow on the brass fitting indicating the direction of water flow. Make sure

the fitting flows water *into* the mister!

Finally, attach a garden hose to the mister and to a pumping engine. Water should now flow out the mister head at the top of the long pipe.



### Protect Yourself

Make sure that the Rehabilitation Sector is established in a safe place away from fire by-products such as smoke, ash, and heat. Also keep the Rehab Sector away from engine exhaust, including the exhaust from portable fans which can contain high levels of carbon monoxide.

Periodically check the water temperature coming out of the mister. Remember that water in the folding tanks that is recycled to keep the fire pump cool will eventually heat up during hot weather operations. The mister may have to be shut down if the water temperature gets too high!



When finished with the emergency operation, clean the mister and return it to the red mesh storage bag. The bag should then be placed on the engine. Take care of the equipment provided for our safety by the Johnson County Fire Auxiliary.

Red Mesh Storage Bag



Contents of Mister Bag



Pipes Assembled



Hose Fitting Attached  
(Note Directional Arrow)



Mister Nozzle



Final Assembled Mister





# Safety Brief

JCFPD Training Division

2011-July

2011-7



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## 2011 Wildland LODDs

It is not unusual to learn of a firefighter suffering a line-of-duty death (LODD) while fighting a wildland fire. But Missouri firefighters often consider this to be a problem for forestry firefighters working large fires in the mountains or the dry regions of the western U.S. However, during 2011, there have been several firefighters killed and near-misses occurring while fighting wildland fires in Texas, Florida, Nebraska, and other areas that don't leap to our mind as those "dangerous" wildfires. Although these incidents are still being investigated, we should keep aware of these hazards while responding to our own incidents.

### Hazards for Firefighters

Several incidents are noteworthy. In Texas, a firefighter suffered blunt-force trauma consistent with being struck by a vehicle and died. Think about recent grass fires you have responded to and consider whether visibility was reduced enough for a firefighter to be struck, either by fire apparatus or civilian vehicles passing by. Are you protecting your fellow firefighters during reduced visibility?

Another firefighter in Texas died and several were burned when their brush trucks got stuck in rough terrain. A fast moving flame front overran their position before they could escape the area. Firefighters in Nebraska were trapped by flames pushed by 50 mph winds and received injuries. Two firefighters operating dozers in Florida were killed when a fast moving fire prevented their escape. Have you seen a fast-moving flame front in tall grass and wondered if you could outrun the fire? Do you always know where your escape path is? If you are an officer or crew chief, are you watching for unusual fire conditions that endanger your firefighters?



## Avoiding Injury

In 1957, the U.S. Forest Service adopted the Standard Firefighting Orders, ten concepts that can help minimize the hazards of wildland firefighting. The ten concepts were expanded into 18 Watch Out Situations, which emphasize how injuries and fatalities can occur. (These two lists were discussed in the March 2006 Safety Brief.)

### The Standard Firefighting Orders

1. Keep informed on fire weather conditions and forecasts.
2. Know what your fire is doing at all times.
3. Base all actions on current and expected behavior of the fire.
4. Identify escape routes and safety zones and make them known.
5. Post lookouts when there is possible danger.
6. Be alert. Keep calm. Think clearly. Act decisively.
7. Maintain prompt communications with your forces, your supervisor, and adjoining forces.
8. Give clear instructions and insure they are understood.
9. Maintain control of your forces at all times.
10. Fight fire aggressively, having provided for safety first.

### Protect Yourself

Our wildland fires may not be as dramatic as those in the mountains out west, but firefighters can be killed or injured while fighting boring, routine grass fires, like those in our district. When we fail to follow the Standard Firefighting Orders established for wildfires, firefighters can be placed in positions where they cannot protect themselves. Pay attention to these ten rules on every incident. If we follow this common-sense approach, we will anticipate problems and provide solutions before firefighters get injured. Stay safe out there!





**Rapid Donning of PPE (time reported in seconds)**

Station	Number of FF's	Average Time	Fastest Time	Slowest Time
1	13	57.9	50	79
2	7	72.1	59	80
3	3	98	75	142
4	3	76.3	54	90
5	7	62.4	45	97
6	6	65.8	45	95
7	9	61	45	75
8	1	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
9	5	90	76	106
10	10	58.6	46	87

**Rapid Donning of SCBA (time reported in seconds)**

Station	Number of FF's	Average Time	Fastest Time	Slowest Time
1	13	65	47	132
2	7	77	54	93
3	3	98	88	114
4	3	82.6	61	100
5	7	88.7	50	152
6	6	89.6	52	173
7	9	72.4	50	104
8	1	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported
9	5	109.8	85	139
10	10	76.9	55	120

**JCFPD Average Times (time reported in seconds)**

JCFPD	# of Firefighters	Average Time	Fastest Time	Slowest Time
PPE	63	66.5	45	142
SCBA	63	80.1	47	173