



Understanding & Implementing STANDARDS

NFPA 1851





Retirement, Disposition, and Special Incident Procedure

10.1 Retirement

10.1.2* Structural fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements shall be retired in accordance with 10.2.1 or 10.2.2, no more than 10 years from the date the ensembles or ensemble elements were manufactured.

Commentary

The annex material associated with this section clarifies further:

A.10.1.2 After discussion of the concept of mandatory retirement for protective elements, the consensus of the Technical Committee, led by the fire service segment, is that the life of a turnout suit is generally less than 10 years. Regardless of when the element was originally produced, it is imperative that the protective elements be routinely inspected to ensure that they are clean, well maintained, and still safe. Just knowing the age of the elements cannot do that. In the 2014 revision cycle the Technical Committee, led by the fire service, again reaffirmed this position.

10.1.4* Structural fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements and proximity fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements that are worn or damaged to the extent that the organization deems it not possible or cost effective to repair them shall be retired in accordance with 10.2.1.

Commentary

Organizations need to evaluate their PPE and make the determination to retire based on damages beyond repair. PPE may need to be replaced prior to reaching the 10 year mark based on wear and tear. A cost analysis evaluating the remaining economic benefit and the remaining level of protective properties relative to the 10 year cutoff may also be helpful in determining when to retire PPE.

Action Items

- ✓ Retire structural and proximity ensembles and ensemble elements no more than 10 years after the date of manufacture.
- ✓ Routinely inspect protective elements to evaluate effectiveness. Don't just rely on the 10 year date as the sole indicator.

10.2 Disposition of Retired Elements

10.2.1 Retired structural fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements and proximity fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements shall be destroyed or disposed of in a manner ensuring that they will not be used in any fire fighting or emergency activities, including live fire training.

10.2.2 Retired structural fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements and proximity fire fighting ensembles and ensemble elements as determined in 10.1.8 shall be permitted to be used as follows:

- (1) For training that does not involve live fire, provided the ensembles and ensemble elements are appropriately marked as being for non-live fire training only
- (2) As determined by the organization

Commentary

Structural and proximity firefighting ensembles and ensemble elements that are no longer of use for the organization but are not contaminated, defective, or damaged can be used for training that does not involve live fire or for other purposes determined by the organization. For example, some AHJs have determined that other uses for PPE that is no longer in service for live fire can be used by drivers, traffic personnel, or for others not participating in fire attack. The gear must be clearly marked that it is not for structural firefighting so there is no confusion.

Action Items

- ✓ Destroy or dispose of retired ensembles or ensemble elements.
- ✓ Do not use retired ensembles or ensemble elements for live fire training.
- ✓ Retired gear being used for purposes other than live fire training or structural firefighting must be clearly marked to avoid confusion.