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31.1 Definitions

In this Part

"*emergency incident*" means a specific emergency operation of a fire department or industrial fire brigade;

"*fire chief*" means the highest ranking person in charge of a fire department or industrial fire brigade;

"fire department" means a fire brigade operated as a public service by

- (a) a municipality, a regional district or an improvement district,
- (b) a board or commission having the management or conduct of work or services on behalf of any of the bodies referred to in paragraph (a), or
- (c) a parks board.

"firefighter" means any worker employed in firefighting, fire inspection, fire investigation, the maintenance of firefighting equipment, the training for and direction of those activities, or other similar duties;

"firefighting vehicle" means an emergency vehicle used for firefighting;

"incident commander" means the firefighter in overall command of an emergency incident;

"industrial fire brigade" means an organization established by an employer to protect the employer's premises where the nature of the business creates specific hazards for which specialized training and equipment is required;

"structure" means a building, vehicle, vessel or similar enclosed location.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 279/2019, effective April 6, 2020.]

31.2 Application

This Part applies to employers and to workers who are employed in firefighting activities on a full or part time basis, including volunteer firefighting in municipal service and industrial fire brigades to which the compensation provisions of the *Workers Compensation Act* apply, but does not apply to forest fire fighting.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 279/2019, effective April 6, 2020.]

31.3 Health and safety committee

(1) If an employer is required under the OHS provisions of the *Workers Compensation Act* to establish a joint committee or worker health and safety representative, then a fire department or industrial fire brigade operated by the employer must have a separate joint committee or worker health and safety representative, as applicable.

(2) Subsection (1) does not affect any obligation to have a workplace health and safety program for the whole of the employer's operations.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 279/2019, effective April 6, 2020.]

31.4 Instruction and direction

The employer must ensure the adequate instruction and direction of firefighters in the safe performance of their duties.

31.5 Procedures

(1) Written procedures must be established and followed by a fire department or industrial fire brigade to

- (a) manage and track firefighters at an emergency incident,
- (b) manage exposure to bloodborne pathogens,
- (c) manage stress arising from an emergency incident that is likely to cause adverse health effect to firefighters,
- (d) provide for effective traffic control at emergency incidents, and
- (e) operate firefighting vehicles during emergency and non-emergency travel.

(2) Written procedures must be established and followed by a fire department or industrial fire brigade for the following situations, where applicable:

- (a) fires in buildings 7 storeys or over;
- (b) firefighting over water and underground;
- (c) fires and other emergency incidents involving hazardous substances;
- (d) rescue from high angles, confined spaces, trenches, excavations and water;

- (e) disaster planning and response;
- (f) electrical emergencies.

31.6 Rest and rehabilitation

The incident commander must make suitable provision for rest and rehabilitation for firefighters at an emergency incident.

31.7 Impounding equipment

If, in the course of an emergency incident, a firefighter suffers serious injury or death, or is involved in an accident involving a risk of serious injury or death, the senior firefighter present must immediately impound the protective and other equipment used by the firefighter and keep the equipment out of service until released by the Board.

31.8 Equipment defects

The employer must, without delay, notify the Board of any structural failure or manufacturing defects detected in a firefighting vehicle, apparatus, or other emergency equipment referred to in this Part.

31.9 Test records

The employer must keep the test and inspection records required by this part available at the workplace for inspection by an officer or the joint committee or worker health and safety representative, as applicable.

31.10 General requirement

Firefighters must wear personal protective clothing and equipment appropriate to the hazards to which they may be exposed.

31.11 Maintenance

- (1) The employer must have written procedures for the inspection of protective clothing and equipment at regular intervals.
- (2) Procedures for cleaning and drying protective clothing must be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- (3) Defective items of protective clothing or equipment must be repaired or replaced.

31.12 Firefighter responsibility

Firefighters must ensure that the personal protective clothing and equipment used by them is maintained in good condition.

31.13 Safety headgear

- (1) Safety headgear must be worn by firefighters required to approach the seat of a fire or enter a structure or other hazardous area during an incident.
- (2) Safety headgear must meet the requirements of *NFPA 1972, Helmets for Structural Firefighting: Structural Fire Fighters Helmets, 1992 Edition*.
- (3) Headgear meeting the requirements for safety headgear in Part 8 (Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment) may be used by firefighters
 - (a) while determining the cause of fires, or carrying out duties associated with preventing fires, or
 - (b) at the discretion of the incident commander, while fighting a fire in vegetation that is not within a structure.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.14 Protective coats, pants and hoods

Firefighters required to approach the seat of a fire or enter a structure or other hazardous area during an incident must wear protective coats, pants and hoods meeting the requirements of

- (a) *NFPA 1971, Protective Clothing for Structural Fire Fighting, 1991 Edition*, or
- (b) *CGSB Standard CAN/CGSB-155.1-M88, Firefighters' Protective Clothing for Protection Against Heat and Flame*.
- (c) Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.15 Stationwear and personal garments

Firefighters required to approach the seat of a fire or enter a structure or other hazardous area during an emergency incident must not wear shirts, trousers, jackets or coveralls that have poor thermal stability or that ignite easily.

31.16 Working gloves

Firefighters required to approach the seat of a fire or enter a structure or other hazardous area during an emergency incident must wear gloves meeting the requirements of *NFPA 1973, Gloves for Structural Fire Fighting, 1988 Edition*.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

Note: See [Part 19 \(Electrical Safety\)](#) for personal protective equipment and other safety measures required for work involving electrical hazards.

31.17 Fall protection

(1) A firefighter working on an aerial ladder must wear a safety belt and lanyard meeting the requirements of [CSA Standard Z259.1-95, Safety Belts and Lanyards](#), and the securing lanyard must limit a fall to no more than 30 cm (12 in).

(2) A firefighter located on an aerial platform must wear a full body harness and lanyard meeting the requirements of Part 11 (Fall Protection).

(3) Rescue ropes, rappelling lines and safety belts and harnesses including safety hooks, rope grabs, lowering devices, and related equipment must meet the requirements of *NFPA 1983, Fire Service Life Safety Rope, Harness and Hardware, 1990 Edition*.

(4) The incident commander may depart from the requirements of Part 11 (Fall Protection) to use a fall protection system if, in the incident commander's opinion, such compliance is not practicable or may create a greater hazard, but subsections (1) to (3) of this section must be complied with.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.18 Personal alert safety system

(1) A firefighter must be provided with and use a Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) when involved in duties which require a self-contained breathing apparatus to be worn.

(2) A PASS device must meet the requirements of *NFPA 1982, Personal Alert Safety Systems (PASS) for Fire Fighters, 1993 Edition*.

(3) A PASS device must be tested at least weekly and prior to use.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.19 General

Firefighters who may be exposed to an oxygen deficient atmosphere or to harmful concentrations of air contaminants must wear a self-contained breathing apparatus of a positive pressure type having a rated minimum duration of 30 minutes.

31.20 Fitness to use SCBA

A physician's certificate of fitness to use self-contained breathing apparatus must be provided to the employer by a firefighter who

(a) experiences breathing difficulty while using the apparatus, or

(b) is known to have heart disease, impaired pulmonary function, or any other condition that might make it dangerous for the firefighter to use self-contained breathing apparatus.

31.21 Operation of SCBA

Respirators must be used in accordance with [CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z94.4-02, Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators](#), Clause 9.1.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 20/2006, effective May 17, 2006.]

31.22 Sealing and fit testing

(1) Firefighters who use a self-contained breathing apparatus must be clean shaven to ensure that the mask forms a positive seal against the face.

(2) Fit tests must be performed in accordance with procedures in [CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z94.4-02, Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators](#).

(2.1) A fit test must be carried out

(a) before initial use of a respirator,

(b) at least once a year,

(c) whenever there is a change in respirator facepiece, including the brand, model, and size, and

(d) whenever changes to the user's physical condition could affect the respirator fit.

(3) Personal protective equipment that is worn with self-contained breathing apparatus and might interfere with a proper fit must be worn during the fit test.

(4) Only corrective eyewear designed for use with self-contained breathing apparatus may be worn.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 20/2006, effective May 17, 2006.]

31.23 Entry into buildings

(1) When self-contained breathing apparatus must be used to enter a building, or similar enclosed location, the entry must be made by a team of at least 2 firefighters.

(2) Effective voice communication must be maintained between firefighters inside and outside the enclosed location.

(3) During the initial attack stages of an incident at least one firefighter must remain outside.

(4) A suitably equipped rescue team of at least 2 firefighters must be established on the scene before sending in a second entry team and not more than 10 minutes after the initial attack.

(5) The rescue team required by subsection (4) must not engage in any duties that limit their ability to make a prompt response to rescue an endangered firefighter while interior structural firefighting is being conducted.

31.24 Air quality and sampling

(1) The employer must ensure that air used for breathing purposes meets the requirements of [CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z180.1-00, Compressed Breathing Air and Systems](#).

(2) The air must be tested at least once annually in a manner acceptable to the Board.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 20/2006, effective May 17, 2006.]

31.25 Spare equipment

(1) When self-contained breathing apparatus are used, the employer must ensure there are at least 4 apparatus available.

(2) At least one spare compressed air cylinder, having a rated minimum duration of 30 minutes, must be maintained at full rated capacity and available for each self-contained breathing apparatus.

31.26 Maintenance and records

(1) Self-contained breathing apparatus, including regulators, must be serviced and repaired by qualified persons.

(2) Inspection of compressed air cylinders must be done in accordance with [CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z94.4-18, Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators](#).

(3) Compressed air cylinders must be hydrostatically tested in accordance with [CSA Standard CAN/CSA-B339-96, Cylinders, Spheres, and Tubes for the Transportation of Dangerous Goods](#).

(4) Complete maintenance and repair records for each self-contained breathing apparatus and all air cylinders must be kept in accordance with the requirements of section 14.6.2 (b) to (f) of [CSA Standard CAN/CSA-Z94.4-18, Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators](#).

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 20/2006, effective May 17, 2006.]

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 229/2025, effective April 1, 2026.]

31.27 Seating

- (1) Firefighters being transported by firefighting vehicles must ride in properly secured seats equipped with seat belts and providing not less than 41 cm (16 in) seating width for each occupant.
- (2) The seats of all new firefighting vehicles ordered after April 15, 1998 must be equipped with headrests or other effective whiplash protection.

31.28 Communication

Crew cabs on firefighting vehicles must have an effective means of voice communication between the driver and passengers.

31.29 Enclosed crew cabs

- (1) Enclosed crew cabs on firefighting vehicles must be equipped with interior lights, and adequately ventilated.
- (2) New firefighting vehicles ordered after April 15, 1998 must have fully enclosed crew cabs meeting the requirements of *NFPA 1901, Automotive Fire Apparatus, 1991 Edition*.

31.30 Stowing equipment

Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 139/2021, effective September 1, 2021.]

31.31 Safe movement of vehicles

Repealed. [B.C. Reg. 139/2021, effective September 1, 2021.]

31.32 Vehicle exhaust in firehalls

Unless air monitoring shows that levels of vehicle exhaust gas components are below the exposure limits established under section 5.48, effective local venting for the exhaust gases must be provided in vehicle areas in firehalls.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 315/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.33 General

An aerial device used for firefighting must meet the requirements of *NFPA 1904, Aerial Ladder and Elevating Platform Fire Apparatus, 1991 Edition*.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.34 Inspection and testing

- (1) A fire department aerial device must be inspected and tested in accordance with good engineering practice at intervals not exceeding 12 months, and certified as safe for use by a professional engineer or the equipment manufacturer.
- (2) The inspection and testing of a fire department aerial device must be done in accordance with the requirements of *NFPA 1914, Testing Fire Department Aerial Devices, 1991 Edition*.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.35 Controls

The turntable on an aerial device must be fitted with a positive locking device to hold it in any desired position.

31.36 Operator location

During the operation of an aerial device an operator must be present at the lower controls in sight of and in voice contact with any firefighters upon the device.

31.37 Ground ladders

(1) A ground ladder used by firefighters must meet the requirements of *NFPA 1931, Design of and Design Verification Tests for Fire Department Ground Ladders, 1989 Edition*.

(2) A ground ladder must be used, tested and maintained in accordance with the requirements of *NFPA 1932, Use, Maintenance, and Service Testing of Fire Department Ground Ladders, 1989 Edition*.

[Amended by B.C. Reg. 312/2003, effective October 29, 2003.]

31.38 Flashlights and hand lanterns

Battery operated flashlights and hand lanterns that are CSA approved for hazardous locations classified under the [CSA Standard C22.1-94, Canadian Electrical Code Part 1](#), as Class 1, Division 2, Groups A, B, and C must be provided as follows:

- (a) one flashlight for each firefighter;
- (b) at least 4 hand lanterns for each firefighting vehicle.

31.39 Plaster hooks and pike poles

Plaster hooks and pike poles must be fitted with electrically non-conductive shafts.

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