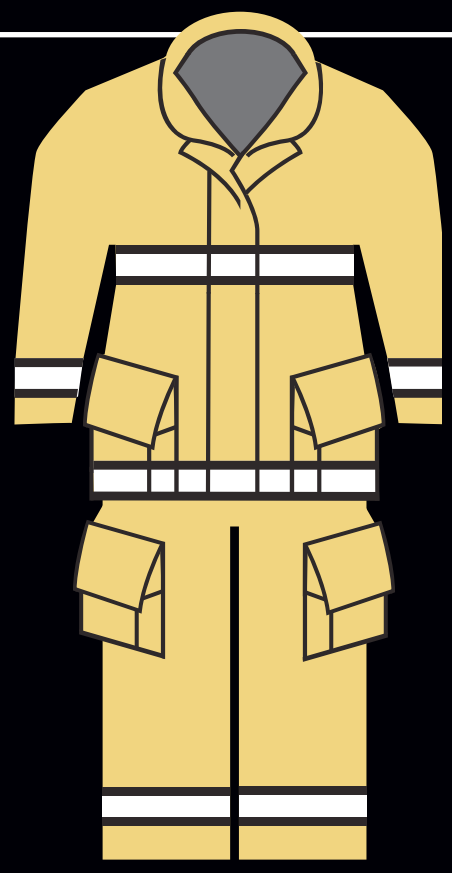


7 Steps to Clean Firefighting Turnout Gear

MSA
The Safety Company

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There was a time when dirty firefighting jackets and pants were worn as badges of honor. However, the entire fire service industry recognizes that soiled or contaminated protective garments can expose firefighters to toxic substances, spread communicable disease, absorb heat, conduct electricity, and can be flammable. In short, clean PPE can help keep you safe.

NFPA 1851 requires the user to evaluate gear after each use to determine the appropriate cleaning level. This includes instructions for cleaning at the scene and an advanced cleaning at least once a year or whenever on-scene cleaning is not sufficient. Here are seven steps to assist in cleaning your gear.

1. CLEAN BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE SCENE

Gently brush or lightly hose gear to remove the large, gross contaminants following overhaul. This on-scene cleaning greatly reduces the amount of particles you take into the rig and the firehouse bay. If an on-scene cleaning doesn't do the job, the PPE requires an advanced cleaning.

NOTE: Step 1 constitutes an on-scene cleaning that should be done prior to removing your PPE at the scene. Steps 2 through 6 constitute an advanced cleaning, performed at least once a year or when on-scene cleaning is not sufficient.



2. INSPECT AND DISASSEMBLE

Wear exam gloves and eye protection during this process. Separate the pants and jacket outer shell, liner system, and drag rescue device. Look for deep stains, tears, holes, and other damage. Any physical damage needs to be repaired before the gear is returned to service. Turn the liner inside out and close all of the outer shell's zippers, clasps, and hook and loop tapes.



3. PRESOAK AND WASH

Pretreat heavily soiled or spotted areas prior to machine laundering. Shells and liners are washed separately in a front loader extractor or machine specifically dedicated for PPE; do not use an agitator. Wash water temperature should not be higher than 105°F, and the detergent must have a pH factor between 6 and 10.5. The washing machine g-force must not exceed 100g for all gear.



4. RE-INSPECT

Once the gear is done washing, inspect it again for stubborn stains. If the gear is not clean, repeat Step 3.



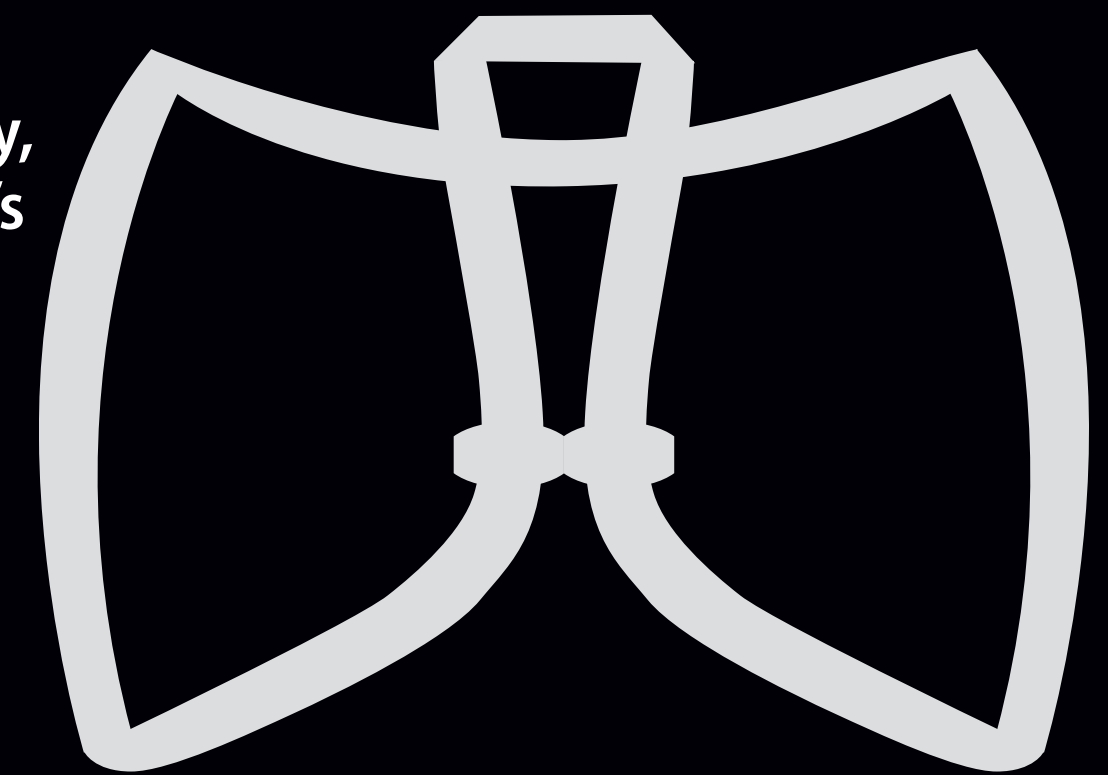
5. DRYING

Dry the gear in an area with good ventilation; never dry in direct sunlight, which can degrade the high-temperature fabrics. When machine drying, fasten all closures and use a no-heat or air-dry option. If no-heat or air-dry is not an option, do not allow the basket temperature to exceed 105°F.



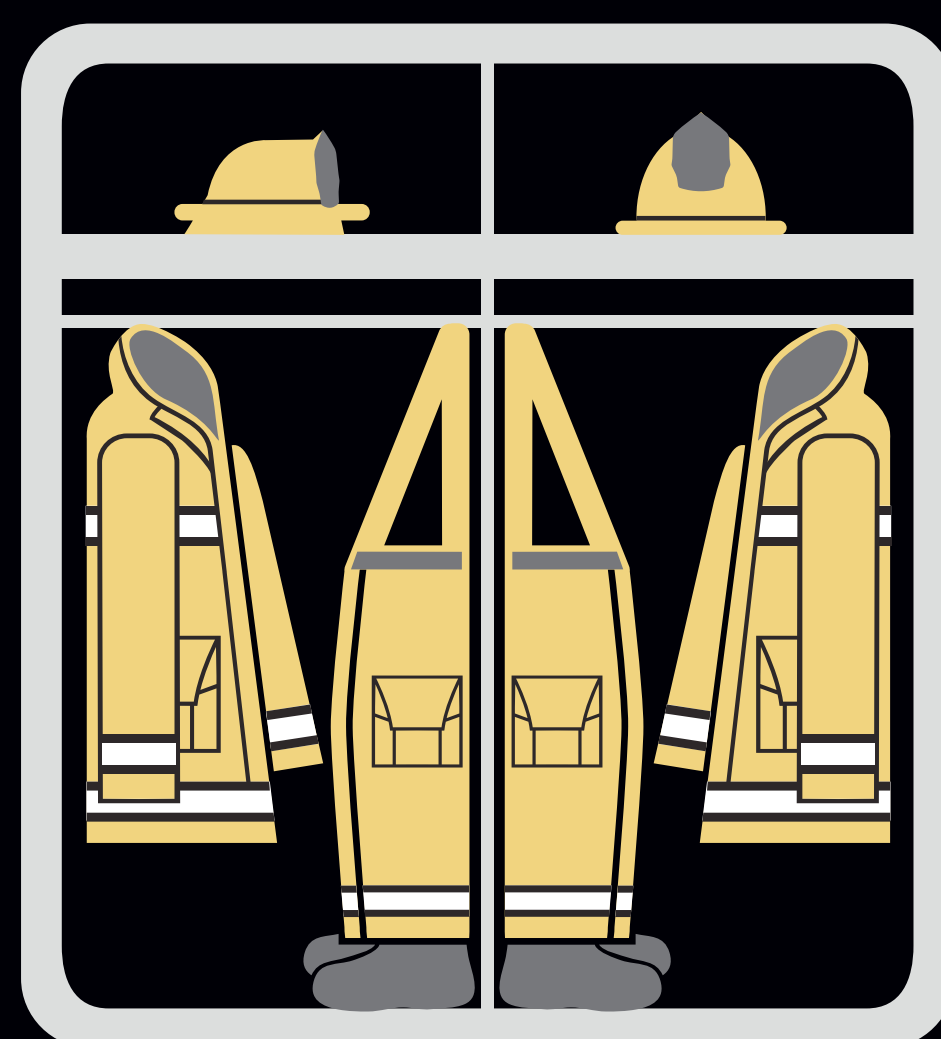
6. REASSEMBLE

When the gear is fully dry, follow the manufacturer's instructions to reinstall the drag rescue device in the jacket and to insert the liners into the outer shells. Check that all of the closures are properly secure and that the drag rescue device is properly installed.



7. STORAGE

Keep clean gear in a dry, well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight and away from indoor light sources; they also produce harmful UV rays. Do not store in extreme hot or cold temperatures, nor in airtight containers. This will keep the materials that make up the PPE from degrading while being stored.



ONLINE RESOURCES

MSAfire.com/Globe | PPE101.com | NFPA.org

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