



# NEWSLETTER



## WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF GEAR CLEANING SOLUTIONS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

At Gear Cleaning Solutions it is our focus to be the resource of the fire service for NFPA 1851 Structural and Proximity Firefighting PPE care and maintenance. At GCS our target is to educate, train and assist the fire service with the development and implementation NFPA 1851 within each fire department.

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## NFPA 1851 CAN BE A HEADACHE AND OVERWHELMING



But it doesn't need to be. Over the next few newsletters, we will be simplifying and discussing how to implement a NFPA 1851 compliant program in your department.

The very first thing that we need to accomplish is to understand the process.

As you can see in the diagram, everything revolves around your SOP.

After an incident occurs the garments need to be cleaned, inspected, repaired if necessary, documented and returned to service.

Once you understand the process, the next step in developing a NFPA 1851

program is to complete a "needs analysis" by answering these basic questions:

- A.- Do you have a relationship with an ISP?
- B.- Do you have an SOP?
- C.- Do you have a tracking system or database?
- D.- Do you have the ability to do your day-to-day cleanings in house? (Routine Cleaning)
- E.- What do you do for your annual cleanings (Advanced Cleanings)?
- F.- Do you know how to inspect your gear?
- G.- Do you want to inspect your own gear or outsource the inspection?
- H.- Does your SOP have procedures for retirement and disposal of gear?
- I.- How do you handle PPE when a recordable injury or LODD occurs?

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## NFPA. WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT DO FOR US? HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

These are questions that many individuals in the fire service may never think about. This is because every shift we wake up, gather all of our things and head to the station for the next shift. When we arrive at the station we never think twice about what we do, how we do it or what tools we use to perform our jobs.

Over the coming newsletters we are going to answer these questions with the goal of learning how much impact NFPA truly has on our jobs. We also want to explain what we can do to get involved as fire fighters, and influence what actually comes out in the standards that we follow each shift as we perform our jobs.

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# WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF GEAR CLEANING SOLUTIONS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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In June of 2007 the National Fire Protection Association revised NFPA 1851, Standard on Selection, Care and Maintenance of Structural Fire Fighting Protective Ensembles which was developed to be a companion document for NFPA 1971, Standard on Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting, the standard manufacturers use to design and produce protective clothing. The goal of NFPA 1851 was written for the end users of structural fire fighting protective clothing to be able to inspect, maintain, and care for the protective clothing they use during normal firefighting operations. The addition of Proximity Fire Fighting protective clothing was included in the 2007 revision of the standard after the incorporation of NFPA 1976 Standard on Protective Ensembles for Proximity Fire Fighting into the 2007 edition of 1971. This was a major revision and many aspects of the standard changed within this revision. The standard implemented new testing and criteria for cleaning and inspection of protective clothing on not only structural fire fighter gear but Proximity fire fighting gear as well. It also introduced a new Verification process for Independent Service Providers (ISP's) and Organizations providing repair services on protective clothing.

The revision of NFPA 1851 although completed in 2007 is considered the 2008 revision because it was actually distributed in 2008.

The 2008 revision changed the fire service! Or did it? What we fail to remember is that NFPA 1851 was initially adopted as a standard in 2001. Care and maintenance of protective clothing was an accepted health and safety standard for more than five years prior to the 2008 revision. NFPA 1851 is a practice that we should have been doing for years and should have been no surprise in 2008.

So what does this all mean? NFPA 1851 was not developed to be a burden to the fire service and add one more thing to our already overwhelming list of things to do. It was developed by the fire service to have practices and procedures in place to take care of our most important tool in the

fire service, our PPE. Do we clean and inspect our clothes on a regular basis before we walk out of the house? Do we clean, polish and maintain our fire trucks everyday when we come on shift? Do we check out our SCBA's everyday in preparation for the next fire? Why would we not take care of our PPE the same way? It is another piece of equipment and more importantly it the first thing we depend on when we jump on the truck for the next run. NFPA 1851 was developed by the fire service "not the manufacturers" for the continual maintenance and assurance that our PPE is in good condition, it performs how it should, and the initial qualities it was manufactured to be maintained throughout is useful life of the gear.

In the coming newsletters we will focus on the development and implementation of an NFPA 1851 program from A to Z. It is our goal to take NFPA 1851 what is thought of as a burden and an overwhelming project for fire departments to understand and implement and simplify it step by step and actually decipher what it all means and what it truly does for the fire service. We will help identify where your department is within the process, identify the individual aspects of NFPA 1851 and how we implement them in a way that can be adapted to each fire department needs and budgets.

Follow us as we go in depth and review NFPA 1851, what it means and how it affects us throughout the rest of our careers and into retirement. Throughout each quarterly newsletter we welcome any feedback and discussions that we will include in future newsletters. As we progress through the coming newsletters, myself as well as any other GCS staff member can be reached for questions, comments and feedback through our website at:

[www.gearcleaningsolutions.com](http://www.gearcleaningsolutions.com)

We are here to be your resource and assist with this process any way we can.

By Tim Tomlinson  
Vice President  
Gear Cleaning Solutions, LLC



## NFPA. WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT DO FOR US? HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

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What is NFPA? NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) is the world's leading advocate of fire prevention and an authoritative source on public safety. NFPA develops,

publishes, and disseminates more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. NFPA membership totals over 75,000 individuals around the world.

Over the coming newsletters we will review the different areas of NFPA and the standard of focus NFPA 1851. We will also keep you up to date on NFPA 1851, what is happening throughout the next revision process as well as post the dates of upcoming meetings and let you know how you can get involved and have input in what goes into the future revisions of the standard.

The next NFPA meeting date and location is below:

### Structural and Proximity Fire Fighting Protective Clothing and Equipment (1971 ROC)

New Orleans, LA  
Embassy Suites New Orleans  
Convention Center  
April 5-7, 2010

## NFPA 1851 CAN BE A HEADACHE AND OVERWHELMING

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Once these questions are answered you will have a better understanding on where you are at and what you're lacking. What I would like to focus on during this newsletter is the first question. Do you have a relationship with an ISP?

This relationship is similar to that of a patient and doctor in which the gear is the patient and the ISP is the doctor. The ISP is there to help evaluate your current and reserve gear then prescribe the best medicine to make that gear safe and compliant. Just like yourself, if you are to get sick or injured between your wellness checks you go see the doctor. If your gear becomes damaged between advanced inspections, you should consult your ISP to perform the inspection and proper repairs so that the gear gets back to a safe and compliant state.

In order for the program to be successful, a reserve or stock cache is necessary. It is not a problem if your department does not have any reserve gear, but should be addressed. The local ISP can help you with different types of programs to address that issue. The reserve gear should be the first pieces receiving an advanced cleaning, inspection and any necessary repairs. Once the reserve gear has been cleaned, inspected and repaired, it may be stored so that it will be readily available when the primary gear goes out of service for the advanced inspection. The length of time that the primary gear will be out of service is anywhere from 24 hours to 10 days. There are several ways to reduce the out of service time of the primary gear, such as scheduling the advanced inspection when the firefighter is off duty and identifying a program that best suites the Fire Department needs. These options should be discussed in the initial consultation with the ISP to decide which option best fits your department.

Since every department has different needs, there are several programs to look at. Here is an outline three basic programs.

The first is a traditional route system designed to be a "hands-off" approach for the fire department. The only work required by fire department personnel is prepping the gear for pick-up. A schedule can be designed to notify all personnel involved of the dates, times and locations of the pick-ups and drop offs. These pick-ups will be on the morning the shift ends. When the firefighters shift ends, he/she will place their own gear in a mesh bag of some kind, and then placed in a predetermined location inside the apparatus bay. The ISP driver will pick-up the gear and deliver it to the ISP facility. At the facility, the program begins first with tracking the gear and entering the information into the database; then advance cleaning, advance inspection, and any repairs that fall along a predetermined cost matrix or repair limit. Once the gear has been cleaned, inspected and repaired, it will be packed and delivered back to the respective station on the night prior to the firefighter going back on shift. The Point of Contact for the department will receive all necessary and required NFPA reports. The route would continue until all shifts, and all stations are covered. At the end of the route, one extra pick-up would be initiated to pick-up any stragglers such as firefighters that might have been on vacation or at another station.

The next program requires the department to deliver or ship the gear. This is the same basic concept of the above mentioned route system other than the turn-around time and a little more work is required of department personnel. A fire department representative will call the ISP to schedule a time for the advanced inspection, and either ship it or deliver it to the ISP facility. Once the gear is received, it will receive all required documentation, advanced inspection, cleaning and repairs if requested. The gear will then be shipped back or packed and ready for fire department to pick-up. Turnaround time on this program is negotiated keeping in mind of shipping times.

The last program available to you is completely customizable. As mentioned before, every department has different needs, so if the first two programs do not fit into your needs, then have your ISP make one that does. One example is that if a department wishes to perform the advanced cleaning in house, then they may want use the ISP to only perform advanced inspection and repairs. Another example is that the department may also wish to perform the advanced inspection along with the advanced cleaning and utilize the ISP for repairs only.

All three programs cover all aspects required by the maintenance section of NFPA 1851: Cleaning, Inspections, Repairs and Documentation. Regardless of your needs and the type of program you use, it is still important to have a relationship with an ISP.

Cost is a motivating factor when deciding which type of program is best for your Department. The following are a few options to help with cost:

- 1) Inspect all Helmets, Boots, Gloves and Hoods in house. This is very simple to do, requires no special equipment and your ISP should be more than happy to assist in setting this up. The savings is estimated at \$60 per firefighter.
- 2) Set up a cost matrix or repair limits that will be based on the replacement cost of new gear. This option ensures NFPA compliance with advance repairs while setting parameters for optional repairs. Contact your ISP for examples of cost matrixes.
- 3) Set a fixed dollar value for repairs per piece (Coat or Pant). In this option the ISP would perform repairs on a garment up to that fixed price; anything over would require approval from you.
- 4) Meet with your ISP and discuss only required and necessary repairs that affect the functionality and safety of the garment. An example, for sake of cutting cost, we may both agree that we will not replace or fix Velcro on pockets.

In summary, I would like to leave you with the idea of relating your ISP as your "Gear Doctor". Your ISP will be there in case of emergency, help establish a plan, and assist you with meeting your goals with NFPA 1851.

In the following newsletters, we will continue to break down the points in the "needs analysis" with the goal of either assisting you develop a program or to improve your already existing program.

For further information, contact me, Rick Johnson, at [rick@gearcleaningsolutions.com](mailto:rick@gearcleaningsolutions.com)



## WE DO CUSTOM ACCESSORIES!

Our accessory department has a wide range products to help you in both your on and off duty days. We can customize them by department, ID number, and fabric type as well as trim style. If you have ideas for custom items we currently do not manufacture, JUST ASK!

### GEAR CLEANING SOLUTIONS HAS YOUR SOLUTION FOR RENTAL GEAR!

Gear Cleaning Solutions is the leading supplier to the fire service industry of Cleaning and Repair of turnout gear. Along with providing the highest quality, service, and support to municipal, industrial, and military firefighting departments, we also provide packages to training academies for rental services of turnout gear to cadets. Included in our rental programs is the care and maintenance of the gear, which allows the gear to last longer and be more effective in training the firefighters for our nation.

Our rental gear program offers you two options for your rental gear needs.

**OPTION #1 - HEAD TO TOE:** A full head to toe structural gear ensemble. This package includes helmet, gloves, coat, pants, boots, hood and a gear bag for easy organization and tracking of gear while loaned out.



Head to Toe



Gear Bag

**OPTION #2- COAT AND PANT:** This package is for the firefighter or academy who has everything but the coat and pants. This package also includes a gear bag to keep your items together and allow you to transport everything you need for your days work.

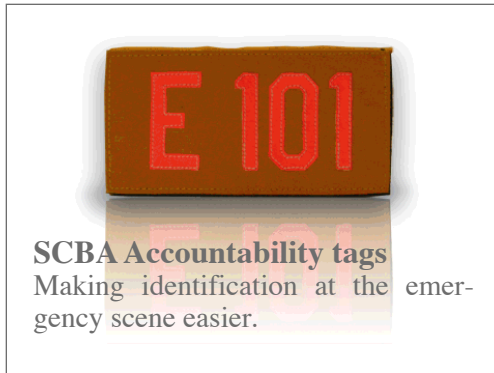


Bunker Pants



Bunker Coat

Please contact us at (214)-774-2213 or [info@gearcleaningsolutions.com](mailto:info@gearcleaningsolutions.com) for terms, pricing and current available sizes.



**SCBA Accountability tags**  
Making identification at the emergency scene easier.



**Gear Bags**  
Two different sizes of gear bag fully customizable with trim, lettering and YOUR department patch.



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For your daily essentials to and from work.

Every one of our accessories can be made to your exact specifications, the trim, material, lettering, and department patches are just some of the options you can choose. If you would like to see more of our products that we currently have available, please visit us at our new site at: [www.firefightersmerchandise.com](http://www.firefightersmerchandise.com)

### Featured Item of the month!

These stockings can be customized by fabric color, lettering, and dept. patch. *Orders will be taken by on a first come basis, we require 3 weeks lead time for orders to be delivered by Christmas.*



Place your order for  
**Christmas**

[www.firefightersmerchandise.com](http://www.firefightersmerchandise.com)