

Standard on Protective Clothing and Ensembles for Emergency Medical Operations

2018



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NFPA® 1999

Standard on

Protective Clothing and Ensembles for Emergency Medical Operations

2018 Edition

This edition of NFPA 1999, *Standard on Protective Clothing and Ensembles for Emergency Medical Operations*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Emergency Medical Services Protective Clothing and Equipment and released by the Correlating Committee on Fire and Emergency Services Protective Clothing and Equipment. It was issued by the Standards Council on August 1, 2017, with an effective date of August 21, 2017, and supersedes all previous editions.

This document has been amended by one or more Tentative Interim Amendments (TIAs) and/or Errata. See "Codes & Standards" at www.nfpa.org for more information.

This edition of NFPA 1999 was approved as an American National Standard on August 21, 2017.

Origin and Development of NFPA 1999

This standard was developed to address protective garments, gloves, and facewear designed that protect persons providing emergency medical care against exposure to liquid-borne pathogens during emergency medical operations. NFPA 1999 defines minimum performance for protective clothing as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Final Rule (29 CFR 1910.1030) *Protecting Health Care Workers from Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens*. The Final Rule states:

"When there is occupational exposure, the employer shall provide at no cost to the employee, appropriate personal protective equipment, such as, but not limited to, gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks, and eye protection, and mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks, or other ventilation devices. Personal protective equipment will be considered 'appropriate' only if it does not permit blood or other potential infectious materials to pass through to or reach the employee's work clothes, street clothes, undergarments, skin, eyes, mouth, or other mucous membranes under normal conditions of use and for the duration of time which the protective equipment will be used."

NFPA 1999 offers specific performance criteria that involve exposing protective clothing materials to surrogate virus challenge utilizing a specific time and pressure protocol. This procedure has been documented to discriminate between current protective clothing materials and to correlate with visual penetration results that are obtained with a human factors evaluation. Each type of clothing must resist penetration to blood-borne pathogens as determined by this test.

Additional garment requirements cover overall liquidtight integrity, material strength, physical hazard resistance, seam strength, and closure strength. Additional requirements for gloves cover minimum performance for tensile and elongation properties in an "as received" condition as well as following heat aging and isopropyl alcohol immersion, minimum sizing, and liquidtight integrity for intended areas of penetration.

Additional requirements for facewear or face protection devices cover adequate visibility and integrity, in addition to resisting penetration of blood-borne pathogens.

The selection of test methods and performance requirements was based on surveys of emergency medical services (EMS) personnel and a technical study supported by the U.S. Fire Administration. The Subcommittee on Hazardous Chemicals Protective Clothing began its work on the first edition of this document in 1990 and passed on its work to the Technical Committee on Fire Service Protective Clothing and Equipment in January 1991. The first edition was presented to the Association at the 1992 Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA.

Since the first edition in 1992, the entire project for fire service protective clothing and equipment was reorganized in January 1995 by the Standards Council. The new project had a

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Technical Correlating Committee on Fire and Emergency Services Protective Clothing and Equipment and eight technical committees operating within it. The Technical Committee on Emergency Medical Services Protective Clothing and Equipment was now responsible for NFPA 1999.

In 1997, the second edition incorporated single-use and reusable items of EMS protective clothing. Prior to that edition, there was no differentiation between single-use and reusable items. Items that were reused might not have continued to provide biopenetration barrier protection. Reusable items could be advantageous and cost-effective for certain items of EMS clothing such as garments. Durability conditioning was added to the test methods of items that would be identified as not for single use only. EMS gloves remained single-use items only. This was consistent with NFPA 1581, *Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program.* EMS gloves were also newly required to be an FDA registered medical device.

The first edition allowed partial body garments, such as sleeve covers or apron-type gowns, and also allowed the biopenetration barrier protection to be less in area than the area covered by the garment (such as only the front of a smock or jacket having the biopenetration barrier protection). The second edition continued to permit partial body garments but did not allow partial biopenetration barrier protection in a garment. Biopenetration barrier protection was required for the full area covered by the garment.

Test methods were completely reformatted to present consistency in test methods and to assure that all key elements of a test were given within the method.

The third edition of NFPA 1999 was reformatted into the new style for all NFPA codes and standards and, therefore, the chapter titles and numbering, as well as paragraph numbering, changed. In that edition, the committee added new requirements for emergency medical work gloves, emergency medical footwear, and cleaning/utility gloves.

Emergency medical work gloves would provide the barrier protection from blood- and liquid-borne pathogens that all EMS PPE provides, and a higher level of physical protection for incidents where rough or sharp surfaces could be contacted, such as during extrication operations. The emergency medical footwear could be configured either as a single-use, disposable bootie to pull over work shoes or as normal footwear designed for multiple uses. Both would provide the same barrier protection from blood- and liquid-borne pathogens as other items of EMS PPE. The cleaning/utility gloves were single-use items to protect wearers during cleaning and decontamination of EMS equipment.

The third (2003) edition of NFPA 1999 was acted on by the NFPA membership at the November Association Technical Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, on November 20, 2002, and became effective on February 6, 2003.

The 2008 (fourth) edition of NFPA 1999 included a number of changes that were implemented to address emerging needs for EMS providers as well as to address the special protection needs of first receivers at hospitals or other health care facilities. Specific attention was paid to types of emergency medical protective clothing items where certification activity and consequent use of certified products had been limited. Much of the work was supported by a research contract effort funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL). The NIOSH NPPTL research program involved a detailed investigation of emergency medical responder needs, identification of evaluation techniques to address these needs, testing of representative products, outreach to end-user groups to assist with discerning acceptable levels of protection, and the proposal of specific criteria. The results of this supporting work are available in the project final report, *Improved Criteria for Emergency Medical Protective Clothing, Contract No. 214-2006-M-15870 Final Report.*

The principal changes incorporated in the fourth edition of NFPA 1999 included the following:

- (1) Differentiation between multiple- and single-use protective garments based on specific physical property criteria.
- (2) Application of a flammability test for certain items of protective clothing to prevent the use of dangerous products in the event of accidental flame contact.
- (3) New design, performance, testing, documentation, and certification requirements for [C]BRN protective ensembles to provide protection for emergency services responders and medical receivers against biological agents and radiological particulates. The use of the [C] in the "[C]BRN" format is to indicate that chemical protection is not offered by this ensemble, while retaining the widely used "CBRN" term. This level of protection would be needed for medical receivers and medical treatment personnel where CBRN incident victims self-present at a medical facility, or the victims have not been decontaminated or only partially decontaminated prior to transport to a medical facility. This [C]BRN protection is not addressed by the single-use garments covered in NFPA 1994, *Standard on Protective Ensembles for First Responders to CBRN Terrorism Incidents*. The new requirements focus on full ensembles that are subject to multiple uses prior to use during a CBRN incident.
- (4) New criteria for head protection to establish protection requirements for impact hazards at emergency sites, and some guidance in the annex provided to also address prevention of trauma to emergency medical personnel traveling inside vehicles.
- (5) New category of footwear to address the physical environments for first receivers at hospitals or other health care facilities.
- (6) Revised criteria for footwear covers to address performance properties consistent with expected use, such as abrasion resistance of sole materials.

- (7) New classification and performance requirements for eye and face protection devices. The new system segregates the different types of eye/face protection into "single-use" and "reusable" devices, and a separate category of medical face masks that are frequently used by emergency services responders during emergency medical care.
- (8) Revision of requirements for cleaning glove performance to eliminate conflicting criteria.
- (9) New optional high-visibility markings criteria for emergency responder protective garments; these optional criteria are consistent with ANSI 107, *Standard on High-Visibility Safety Apparel.*

In addition to the principal changes, a number of clarifications and improvements were made to ensure consistency of requirements throughout the standard.

The fourth (2008) edition was issued by the NFPA Standards Council with an effective date of December 31, 2007.

The fifth (2013) edition of NFPA 1999 was a complete revision of the document that included editorial changes, updates to referenced publications, and new or revised definitions for *gusset*, *tongue*, *interface component*, and *manufacturer*.

The 2013 edition removed the puncture resistance test two and the impact and compression resistance test. Revisions to the abrasion test, slip resistance test, footwear upper materials testing, cut resistance test, washing and drying procedures, and chemical permeation resistance test were also included. This edition also featured a new section on work glove test areas.

The sixth (2018) edition of NFPA 1999 was a complete revision and mainly featured the incorporation of TIA 13-1 [related to the PPE requirements of first responders and medical first receivers against Ebola Viral Disease (EBD) and other highly infectious liquid-borne pathogens]. This edition features new provisions for performance requirements for PPE ensembles that offer full body protection and a liquid integrity evaluation to demonstrate an established protective level of performance.

Other changes include adding the word "ensembles" to the name of the standard. NFPA 1999 now also applies to single-use and multiple-use emergency protective ensembles and provides definitions for those terms. Changes were also made to the design requirements for garment footwear and respirator requirements. Changes were made to the liquidtight integrity test and the puncture resistance test. *Elastomer interface material* is now defined, and new performance requirements for those items was added. This one item alone resulted in a number of editorial changes for consistency throughout the standard.

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Committee Scope: This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on the design, performance, testing, and certification of protective clothing and protective equipment manufactured for fire and emergency services organizations and personnel, to protect against exposures encountered during emergency incident operations. This Committee shall also have the primary responsibility for documents on the selection, care, and maintenance of such protective clothing and protective equipment by fire and emergency services organizations and personnel.

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Additionally, this committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on the selection, care, and maintenance of emergency medical protective clothing and protective equipment by fire and emergency services organizations and personnel.

Contents

Chanter	1 Administration	1999_ 8
1.1	Scope	1999-8
1.1	Purpose	1999-8
1.2	Application	1000 _0
1.5	Unite	1999 _ 9
1.1	Cind.	1000 0
Chapter	2 Referenced Publications	1999– 9
2.1	General	1999– 9
2.2	NFPA Publications.	1999– 9
2.3	Other Publications.	1999– 9
2.4	References for Extracts in Mandatory	
	Sections. (Reserved)	1999– 11
Chapter	3 Definitions	1999 – 11
3.1	General.	1999–11
3.2	NFPA Official Definitions.	1999–11
3.3	General Definitions.	1999 – 11
Chantor	4 Cortification	1000 14
	General	1000 14
4.9	Certification Program	1000 15
4.2	Inspection and Testing	1999 –19
4.5	Appual Verification of Product Compliance	1999 –19
4.5	Manufacturer's Quality Assurance Program	1000 17
4.6	Hazards Involving Compliant Product	1000_17
4.0	Manufacturers' Investigation of Complaints	1555-17
1.7	and Returns	1 000 _ 90
48	Manufacturers' Safety Alert and Product	1555-20
4.0	Recall Systems	1 000 _ 90
	Recail Systems:	1555-20
Chapter	5 Product Labeling and Information	1999– 20
5.1	Product Label Requirements for Emergency	
	Medical Protective Clothing Items.	1999– 20
5.2	User Information.	1999– 25
5.3	Technical Data Package	1999– 26
Ŭ		
Chapter 6 Design Requirements		1999– 30
6.1	Emergency Medical Protective Garment	
	Design Requirements.	1999– 30
6.2	Emergency Medical Glove Design	
	Requirements	1999– 31
6.3	Emergency Medical Eye and Face Protection	
	Device Design Requirements	1999– 33
6.4	Emergency Medical Footwear Design	
	Requirements.	1999– 33
6.5	Multiple-Use Emergency Medical Helmet	1000 01
	Design Requirements.	1999– 34
6.6	Emergency Medical Powered Air-Purifying	1000 07
a =	Respirator Design Requirements.	1999– 35
6.7	Single-Use Emergency Medical Protective	1000 05
6.0	Ensemble Design Requirements.	1999– 35
6.8	Multiple-Use Emergency Medical Protective	1000 07
	Ensemble Design Requirements.	1999– 35
Chanter	7 Performance Requirements	1 999_ 36
7.1	Emergency Medical Garment Performance	1000-00
	Requirements	1999_ 36
79	Emergency Medical Glove Performance	1000-00
	Requirements	1999_ 38
7.3	Emergency Medical Eve and Face Protection	1000-00
	Device Performance Requirements	1999_ 39
7.4	Emergency Medical Footwear Performance	1000 00
	Requirements.	1999_ 39
		1000 00

7.5	Multiple-Use Emergency Medical Helmet	
	Performance Requirements.	1999– 40
7.6	Emergency Medical Powered Air-Purifying	
	Respirator Performance Requirements.	1999– 41
7.7	Single-Use Emergency Medical Protective	
	Ensemble Performance Requirements	1999_ 41
78	Multiple Use Emergency Medical Protective	1555-11
7.0	Encomble Derformance Dequirements	1000 41
	Ensemble renormance Requirements	1999-41
Chanter	8 Test Methods	1999_ 49
81	Sample Preparation Procedures	1999_ 49
8.9	Liquidtight Integrity Test One	1000_43
0.4	Biopopotration Test One	1999– 43
0.5	Tongilo Strongeth Toge	1999-44
0.4	Pressie Strength Test.	1999-40
8.5	Burst Strength Test.	1999-46
8.6	Puncture Propagation Tear Resistance Test	1999-46
8.7	Tear Resistance Test One.	1999-46
8.8	Seam Breaking Strength Test	1999– 47
8.9	Liquidtight Integrity Test Two	1999–47
8.10	Biopenetration Test Two	1999– 47
8.11	Ultimate Tensile Strength Test	1999– 48
8.12	Ultimate Elongation Test	1999– 48
8.13	Puncture Resistance Test One.	1999– 49
8.14	Dexterity Test One.	1999– 49
8.15	Protein Content Test.	1999– 50
8.16	Visual Acuity/Fogging Resistance Test	1999– 50
8.17	Liquidtight Integrity Test Three.	1999– 51
8.18	Cut Resistance Test.	1999– 52
8.19	Abrasion Resistance Test One	1999-52
8 20	Slip Resistance Test	1999_ 53
8.20	Fyelet and Stud Post Attachment Test	1999-53
8 99	Corrosion Desistance Test	1000 58
8.92	Overall Liquid Integrity Test Four	1999-55
0.23	Chamical Permeation Peristance Test	1999- 54
0.24	Abustica Permeation Resistance Test.	1999- 54
0.20	Abrasion Resistance Test Two.	1999-55
8.20	Dexterity lest two.	1999-55
8.27	lorque lest.	1999-55
8.28	Moisture Vapor Transmission Rate Test	1999-56
8.29	Overall Liquid Integrity Test Three	1999– 56
8.30	Tactility Test	1999– 57
8.31	Water Absorption Resistance Test	1999– 57
8.32	Total Heat Loss Test	1999– 58
8.33	Label Durability and Legibility Test	1999– 58
8.34	Retroreflectivity Test.	1999– 59
8.35	Flammability Test	1999– 59
8.36	Suspension System Retention Test	1999– 60
8.37	Retention System Test	1999– 61
8.38	Goggle and Headlamp Clip Attachment	
	Test.	1999– 63
8.39	Fastener Tape Strength Test.	1999– 63
8.40	Overall Ensemble Function and Integrity	
	Test.	1999– 64
8.41	Visor Drop Ball Impact Resistance Test.	1999– 65
8.42	Evaporative Resistance Test.	1999 – 66
	т.	00
Annex A	Explanatory Material	1999– 66
Annex B	Informational References	1999– 79
Inder		1000 01
maex		1999- 91