

Guideline Name: Safety and Personal Protective Equipment Policy		Department: Orange County Emergency Medical Services
Effective Date: 1/15/2022	Issued: 12/30/2022	Approval(s): Kim Woodward, EMS Division Chief 

Purpose: To establish EMS Department expectations regarding safety in operations and the issuance, expected utilization, and required maintenance of employee issued Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Scope: This procedure applies to all members of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division, including EMS Officers and Supervisors.

Policy Statement: EMS recognizes that employee safety is always the priority in operations, in particular the importance of PPE for the health and safety of personnel. EMS will provide, through a phased roll-out template, PPE in accordance with all directives from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Orange County Risk Management, Orange County Human Resources, The North Carolina Office of EMS (NCOEMS), and other applicable agencies, to all personnel prior to assignment of emergency response duties.

A. Employee Safety

It is expected that each and every employee approach every situation with the primary emphasis being on safety. Each employee should always maintain situational awareness as it pertains to their current activity in order to actively monitor for possible unsafe practices either by themselves or others, in each and every dimension of the job. To facilitate this, the following requirements established are:

1. All employees are authorized to stop any practice they witness and/or have received knowledge that the practice is likely to result in injury, liability, or other unfavorable outcome.
2. While on duty, every employee issued PPE under this policy is required to have in their possession all assigned PPE without exception. This includes any time that an employee is actively engaged in field operations, including, but not limited to, special event stand-by coverage, off-duty activation, and other like events.
3. All PPE shall be properly maintained, cleaned, and kept in sound working order in accordance to manufacturer guidelines at all times by the individual employee. These guidelines and the necessary materials or equipment to follow these

guidelines will be provided by the agency. This is to include the maintenance of any required records for respiratory protection equipment.

B. Employer Issued PPE:

Each employee will be provided the following equipment, with any quantity greater than 1 as noted:

1. Regular duty boots compliant with ANSI standards and OSHA 1910.136.
2. A jumpsuit type garment that is compliant to a minimum of the NFPA 1999 standard.
3. Protective helmet compliant at a minimum with NFPA 1971 (available on each ambulance).
4. Leather work gloves, approved by EMS leadership, for hand protection that are compliant to a minimum of the NFPA 1999 standard (available on each ambulance).
5. HexArmor EXT 4012 cut resistant heavy duty rescue gloves. ANSI/ISEA approved.
6. ANSI Level 2 traffic vest (available on each ambulance).
7. Eye protection compliant to NFPA 1999 and ANSI Z87.1 (available on each ambulance).
8. Gear bag for the storage and transportation of all PPE.
9. Other equipment as required for assignment to a specialty team.
10. The security and accountability of PPE is the responsibility of the employee.

C. Employee Furnished PPE:

1. Personnel are not permitted to wear protective clothing not issued to them by Orange County Emergency Medical Services without specific permission from the EMS Operations Chief or their designee [OSHA 1910.132(b)].
2. Employees wishing permission to use equipment not issued by OCES, shall place a written request to the Orange County Emergency Medical Services Operations Manager, via the chain of command, completely describing the need, the piece of equipment and its specifications in compliance with Section B.
3. This request to wear non-issued EMS equipment will be evaluated to determine if the equipment meets adopted standards and is a viable substitute. These requests will be evaluated in a timely manner and on a case by case basis.
4. Approved non-issued EMS equipment damaged due to circumstances of assigned duties shall be evaluated for replacement on a case by case basis.

D. Intended Use of PPE

1. The protective jumpsuits are for use in any situation where the employee may reasonably come in contact with sharp edges, when the danger for abrasion or exposure supersedes the duty uniform, or when the potential for burn or fire exists. If any of these perceived or actual circumstances are in place the employee shall don personal protective clothing prior to initiating patient contact. Examples may include, but are not limited to, MVC's, construction/industrial emergencies, farm equipment emergencies, etc.
2. Protective helmets are for use in any situation where the employee may reasonably come in contact with sharp edges, in confined or congested spaces where the employee is subject to impact, when the potential for falling objects or projectiles exists, or when the potential for impact with moving objects exists [OSHA 1910.135]. Examples may include, but are not limited to, MVC's, construction/industrial emergencies, farm equipment emergencies, etc.
3. Protective eyewear is for use in any situation where there exists a potential for flying objects or for splashes from blood, body fluids, or other hazardous material and/or any other situation that threatens the eyes.
4. Protective footwear will be provided by EMS and be in compliance with OSHA 1910.136. The uniform boot will serve as the primary protective footwear measure for routine operations.
5. Leather gloves are for use in all situations where the reasonable expectation of sharp edges is present, compliant to NFPA 1999 standard.
6. HexArmor Gloves are used for vehicle extrication and in all situations where metal and glass hazards are present, to prevent the provider from suffering a hand injury.
7. Exam type non-latex gloves are for use in **all** patient contact scenarios and whenever blood or bodily fluids are present
8. Reflective traffic vests are for use at all incidents in or immediately near any area designated for the traffic flow of moving vehicles, including streets, highways, parking lots, and medians or other areas immediately adjacent to highways (23 C.F.R. Part 634) or in any circumstances directed by the operations manager.
9. An issued N95 face mask, or other appropriate respiratory protection device shall be donned and utilized as required by all EMS personnel compliant to OSHA Standard 1910.134

10. The training of the above equipment will be conducted or managed by the Orange County EMS Training Division.

E. Maintenance of PPE

1. Personnel shall maintain all assigned personal protective equipment in a deployable state of readiness at all times and in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines. These guidelines will be made available from the Orange County Emergency Medical Services Training Division.
2. As required, the EMS jumpsuit and/or turnout gear shall be laundered per the manufacturers specifications (attached), never using chlorine bleach, in approved washers and dryers at approved locations.

Related Publications:

OSHA 1910.132 and 1910.136