PREMISE: Proper use of Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) will limit injury to and increase effectiveness of personnel operating in hazardous atmospheres.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this practice is to maximize the safety of firefighters working in hazardous atmospheres.

SCOPE: This practice is recommended for use by all Pennington County firefighters.

HISTORY: Original Release: October 14, 1992
Revised: July 10, 2013

EXCEPTION: The provisions of this practice may be impractical to apply under circumstances normally found in wildland fire suppression activities.

OPERATING PRACTICE:

1. SCBA of the open-circuit design should be positive pressure and should meet the requirements of NFPA 1981, "Standard on Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus for Firefighters." Closed-circuit type SCBA should be NIOSH/MSHA approved with a minimum service duration of 30 minutes, and should operate in the positive pressure mode only.

2. All personnel should wear SCBA when operating in any area where toxic chemicals, smoke, or other agents or conditions dangerous to the respiratory system may exist.

3. Personnel should assure that the SCBA is working properly before entering the work area. Beards or facial hair that interfere with the face piece seal are discouraged for members required to use SCBA's. If eye glasses are worn, the personnel should use frames that do not interfere with the seal of the face piece.

4. Personnel entering the work area with SCBA's should work in pairs or teams and should stay in direct visual or audible contact with their partner or team members.

5. When a person hears his/her SCBA low pressure alarm he/she should immediately leave the area with his/her partner.

6. When a person experiences SCBA malfunction he/she should immediately leave the area with his/her partner, report the malfunction, and tag the SCBA for repair.