FIRE INVESTIGATION

In 2022, the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI) updated its comprehensive guide to best practices regarding the exposure risk fire investigators face once the fire is out and they begin their work to determine cause and origin. This comprehensive manual, developed with leading fire service researchers, will provide best practices for those in the fire service who work in our Fire Investigation Units.

For updated information visit wscff.org/fireinvestigations.

TRANSPORTING CONTAMINATED EQUIPMENT

Contaminated equipment, turnouts and hose should be transported back to the fire station in a manner designed to reduce cross-contamination. That includes:

• Gear should be encapsulated utilizing a single-use, clear or well-marked heavy-duty plastic bag. The bag should be of sufficient size (42-gallon) and strength (6 mil) to contain all contaminated gear, including turnouts, helmet, mask, gloves and boots. WAC 296-62 provides requirements for asbestos activities and abatement, which includes encapsulating the hazard with a thicker bag. With the uncertainty of specific hazards at the fire scene, a best practice should assume all gear and clothing contaminated by fire-suppression activities contains asbestos.

• The encapsulated gear should be placed outside of the passenger compartment, in an external compartment. Transport gear in a similar manner to a facility with an extractor or to an ISP.

• Upon arrival back at the fire station, and prior to personnel taking showers, wear appropriate PPE to open the turnout bag and let the turnouts off-gas outside the fire station. After showering and changing into a clean uniform, remove any tools from turnouts and launder in extractor or repackage for transport to designated cleaning station or ISP.

• Contaminated equipment, hose and turnouts transported in the bed of a utility pickup will not need to be encapsulated. Be sure to wear appropriate PPE when handling contaminated equipment and clean the transport vehicle after use.

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