

**Your Safety**



**Our Concern**

*Fire Equipment  
Specialties, Inc.*

City of Princeton – Fire Department  
Bob Gerold – Public Works Director  
705 Second Street North  
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February 15, 2024

Bob,

On February 12, 2024 I was asked to meet with you and Josh, the Assistant Fire Chief. At that meeting, you had a list of personal protective equipment (PPE, Coat, Pant, Boots) you wanted me to look at because of safety concerns brought forth from the Fire Department.

We started the meeting off with some education on the PPE the Princeton Fire Department is using and how it relates to firefighter safety. As you may recall, the Princeton Fire Department is purchasing the highest level of PPE available in the market today. Not only is it the highest level of PPE, but it offers the most flex, fit and comfort available from Lion Apparel. Lastly, the garments also have the Lion Isodri Technology, which keeps the garments lighter, drier and has less potential for steam burns while fighting fires.

We then began to inspect the PPE you had on your list and addressed each concern that was raised. Out of all the PPE inspected, only one pair of pants needed some repair for a small burn on the left knee which also affected the liner system. All other PPE concerns raised needed no corrective action to be safely used.

One SCBA facepiece was questioned because of a flaking surface on the facepiece lens. I did call the local MSA representative and explained to him what we were seeing. It was his opinion that the flaking was only the anti-scratch material on the lens and that there were no safety concerns with continuing to use it.

Also noted was a Nomex hood that had some minor burn marks around the facepiece opening. It was noted that the hood did what was expected of it in preventing any injury to the firefighter. The noted hood was still safe for use. I should also note that the hood used was a particulate blocking hood which is made to help firefighters.

### **Areas of Improvement**

All PPE needs to be washed on a regular basis and after every fire. This is an individual responsibility and a cancer preventive measure. The department already has the equipment to do this so this would be at no cost to the city. Dirty garments also defeat the purpose of why the Fire Department purchased the Isodri Technology in the first place (lighter, drier, less potential for steam burns).

Provide PPE training to all members so they understand the importance of clean gear and how it protects you. This training would be done by the local representative and will be at no charge to the city.

If not already in place, a clear means of documenting PPE issues and concerns. A form should be used after each gear inspection to report any problems or needs.

Follow the recommendation of NFPA 1851, the cleaning and repair standard. This would be very expensive for the city and would take PPE out of service for periods of time. Each firefighter would need two sets of gear if this standard was to be followed. NFPA 1851 is a standard that is voluntary in the State of MN, but it is highly recommend to follow as best as possible for the safety and wellness of firefighters.

In summary, the Princeton Fire Department is using gear that will protect its firefighters well during emergencies. Cleaning of the gear seems to be an area where most improvement can be made. Cleaning of the gear will not only protect firefighters against cancer causing products of combustion, but it will also help the gear to make its intended 10 year service life.

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