

REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE TO PFAS IN TURNOUT GEAR



PFAS exposures in firefighting are linked to Class B aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), firefighter turnout gear, and fire station dust. Your turnout gear protects you from burns and harmful chemicals during a fire, so it is essential protective equipment. It also can contain residual chemicals from a fire even after washing and may continuously shed PFAS. Below are guidelines for reducing your exposure to PFAS from turnout gear.



01 — Only Wear Turnout Gear When Essential

Reconsider wearing your turnout gear on calls where there is NOT a fire. Only wearing your turnout gear when absolutely essential will help to reduce your PFAS exposure by limiting your contact.



02 — Store Turnout Gear in an Enclosed, Designated Area

Gear should be stored in an enclosed, designated area that is away from living/eating areas. Ideally, this area has its own air filtration/HVAC system. This will reduce your contact with any PFAS released from the gear into air and dust, as well as other carcinogens that get onto gear during a fire. If your station does not have separate storage capabilities, then store gear in closed lockers or gear bags when not in use.



03 — Thoroughly Clean Contaminated Turnout Gear

Clean is the new salty! Thoroughly clean any contaminated turnout gear, including hood, gloves, boots, SCBA mask, and helmet. Keep your gear clean to protect your health. Ideally, fire stations should work towards having an extractor to wash turnout gear and a designated hazard area for drying so firefighters are neither washing nor drying gear at home.



04 — Use Hazard Zones Designations at the Station

The IAFF recommends having three hazard zones - red, yellow, & green - in the station to avoid contamination from toxic chemicals. Red Zones are where decontamination of contaminated gear/equipment occurs. Yellow Zones are for clean gear/equipment storage. Green Zones are living spaces where gear/equipment are not allowed.



05 — Wash Hands

Wash your hands with soap and water to remove PFAS and other contaminants after handling your turnout gear, especially before eating or preparing food.



06 — Advocate for Fluorine-free Alternatives

Speak to your station, union, town, and legislators as needed for support in obtaining fluorine-free turnout gear. Getting PFAS out of products in the fire service will help protect firefighters and their communities.