

Health and Safety Standard for Hair and Beards

#A-011

Date: 01-11-1998

Firefighting takes place in highly heated, toxic, poorly illuminated, abnormal, and unsanitary conditions. Smoke inhalation, heat prostration, lacerations, burns, and falls are common consequences of firefighting. Hair of excessive length on the head and hair on the face of any length will increase the possibilities of the indispositions mentioned above. With the mask face piece designs currently in use, it has reliably been proven by NASA, the National Bureau of Standards, various breathing apparatus manufacturers, and others that it is impossible to obtain a satisfactory seal on a bearded man.

It is evident also that flowing hair is more readily ignited and that the health of the individual firefighter is compromised when working in an unsanitary environment. Lacerations on hair-covered surfaces are subject to infection in direct proportion to the area and depth of the hair thereby complicating the injury and extending the recuperation period. Accordingly, safety standards for hair and beards are hereby established within the following guidelines. They shall apply to all Union Vale interior firefighters and additionally to any other operation that requires the use of self-contained breathing apparatus. (See **#A-001**)

A) Head Hair

- 1) Head hair shall be of such length and style as desired but shall not be excessive in length at any point.
- 2) Hair, except for layered or cropped areas, shall not protrude below any point along the full band line of the helmet.
- 3) Hair at the back of the neck shall be tapered neatly and shall not extend below the shirt collar.

B) Facial Hair

- 1) Mustaches are permitted but shall conform to the following:
 - a) They must be closely trimmed.
 - b) They must not extend more than 1" below the corners of the mouth and not below any portion of the upper lip.
- 2) Beards and goatees that contact **SCBA** mask seal are not permitted.

C) Sideburns

- 1) Sideburns are permitted but shall conform to the following:
 - a) They shall be kept neatly trimmed and close to the face to avoid any possibility of a defective mask facepiece seal.
 - b) They shall not extend below the lower extremity of the ear.

D) Ladies hair

- 1) Ladies hairstyle and length are required to meet the safety criteria as detailed above.