



OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE COMMISSIONER

Date: August 8, 2002 – Reissued

Subject: Facial Hair/SCBA Use

To: All Local Level Instructors
County/Regional School Committees
Certification Field Test Sites

From: Timothy L. Dunkle, Administrator *Timothy L. Dunkle*
Pennsylvania State Fire Academy

The issue of facial hair on firefighters has long plagued the fire service and, specifically, fire training programs. Concern has been centered on the effect of facial hair has on the safety of a facepiece seal on SCBA.

After reviewing all evidence pro and con, pertinent legal decisions, Federal regulations and other relevant data, we at the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy have determined that the wearing of beards or other facial hair (other than a trimmed mustache) is incompatible with the duties of persons directly involved (or who **may** become directly involved) in operations at emergency scenes where SCBA is or **may be** required.

In keeping with this determination, and in order to protect the interests of both students and the Commonwealth, it shall be the policy of the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy that persons taking part in any class whose subject matter involves the use or potential use of SCBA in any **simulated** or actual irrespirable or potentially irrespirable atmosphere as part of class activity shall be clean shaven, except for the option of a well trimmed mustache. Other hair will be worn in such a manner as to preclude interference with a SCBA facepiece seal and to be substantially covered by protective clothing.

The final determination as to whether an individual meets this criterion shall rest with the instructor(s) of the class. Instructors and sponsoring officials of county or regional training activities shall be held fully accountable for adherence to this policy. Students **not** in compliance will be deemed to have **not** satisfied class completion criteria, and will **not** be issued certificates.

We feel that this policy will serve the best interests of the students and will set a positive example for day-to-day fire service operations.

This policy is in effect as to the conduct of courses of the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy Resident and Local Level training programs, and the Voluntary Fire Fighter Certification program.

Supersedes Facial Hair/SCBA Use Memo dated June 10, 1991