

PURPOSE: To provide a guideline for the use of high visibility garments by Fire Department personnel

BACKGROUND: On November 24, 2008, the Federal Highway Administration, issued an interim final ruling (23CFR 634) which created an exemption for Firefighters. This Guideline provides direction as to the situations appropriate for safety clothing versus the high visibility vests.

PROCEDURE:

To provide for personnel safety, a 23 CFR 634 ANSI 207 type 2 compliant vest shall be worn in the following situations:

1. Whenever members are operating on or near a roadway, highway or other areas where vehicles operate.
2. Whenever members are operating in a railroad right of way.
3. Whenever members are operating in industrial areas where mobile vehicles and/or mobile machines are in use.
4. Whenever directed by a superior officer.

Any time Firefighters are exposed to fire, heat, flame or hazardous materials they should wear the appropriate PPE as outlined in current NFPA standards. A vest in these situations would not be appropriate as it may lead to various hazards. Members of hazardous materials teams, bomb units, water rescue or other technical specialists, when directly engaged in actions requiring specific PPE or equipment that conflicts with this standard, and use of such PPE would hinder their performance or constitute a competing hazard, shall be exempted from the standard. In these instances, the incident scene must be made secure against traffic in the perimeter in which they are working. Those responders, when not engaged in technical duties shall wear compliant garments while on the incident scene.

It is required that in the situations listed above that members, must at all times, wear a garment that meets the reflective standard.