

# NFPA

# 1500<sup>TM</sup>

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Standard on  
Fire Department Occupational Safety,  
Health, and Wellness Program

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## 2021



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## NFPA 1500™

### Standard on

## Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program

### 2021 Edition

This edition of NFPA 1500™, *Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program*, was prepared by the Technical Committee on Fire Service Occupational Safety and Health and acted on by the NFPA membership during the 2020 NFPA Technical Meeting held June 8–29. It was issued by the Standards Council on August 11, 2020, with an effective date of August 31, 2020, and supersedes all previous editions.

This document has been amended by one or more Tentative Interim Amendments (TIAs) and/or Errata. See “Codes & Standards” at [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) for more information.

This edition of NFPA 1500 was approved as an American National Standard on August 31, 2020.

### Origin and Development of NFPA 1500

The first edition of NFPA 1500 was published in 1987 because there was no consensus standard for an occupational safety and health program for the fire service. Fire service organizations were being increasingly subjected to regulations developed for general industry that did not provide for many of the specific needs and concerns of an organization involved in the delivery of emergency services. Direct line-of-duty deaths were documented and reported, but there was a growing concern with the number of fire fighters who suffered disabling injuries or developed occupational diseases that had debilitating or fatal consequences. Following the first edition, revised editions were published in 1992, 1997, and 2002.

For the 2007 edition, the technical committee, working from data provided from NFPA’s Data Analysis and Research Division and NIOSH Fire Fighter Investigation reports, carefully reviewed the entire document, including the associated annex material, and updated many areas to reflect current best practices. Requirements were reorganized in some areas to make the document more user-friendly.

Among the changes made were revising the section on risk management and inserting additional explanation in the annex. A new section on appointment of a health and safety officer was added, and sections that duplicated the responsibilities of the health and safety officer in NFPA 1521, *Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents*, were removed.

Chapter 5 was reorganized and revised to reflect not only the need of members to have skills and knowledge in performing day-to-day tasks but also the need for ongoing professional development.

In Chapter 6, requirements and annex material were added to support improved vehicle response operations with an emphasis on safe arrival at the scene.

Requirements for providing and using protective ensembles appropriate for technical rescue operations and chemical and biological terrorism incidents that went into the 2002 edition as a TIA were updated and incorporated, as were other requirements for personal protective ensembles.

New sections on traffic incidents, establishing control zones, and fitness for duty evaluations were added.

For the 2013 edition, the committee updated many of the references and referenced materials to ensure consistency between this document and other projects. Some of those other projects had to do with personal protective equipment (PPE), fire department apparatus, and respiratory protection. The committee included new requirements for the training, use, and limitations of PPE. The committee also developed new requirements to include not only the ensemble but also ensemble elements, which meant anything added to the ensemble as part of the requirements. The cleaning and care of PPE as well as station/work uniforms was also addressed with new or updated

requirements. For fire department apparatus, the committee brought the related requirements in this document in line with requirements in the respective projects. Some issues that were addressed were the inclusion of a vehicle data recorder (VDR) and a driver training program and requirements, as well as requirements for the wearing of helmets in an enclosed cab. Another issue was unintentional hose deployments while the fire department apparatus was driving on roadways. The committee developed text to ensure that the fire department took steps to ensure that this would not happen. The committee also looked at the issue of buddy breathing as it relates to self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) use, and it developed cleaner text around the use of a buddy breathing system. The committee included new requirements stressing the need for a risk assessment to be conducted at every incident based on the nature of the incident and to also recognize the need for specialized crew members based on that incident. Another important update made in the 2013 edition was the use of the term *mayday* as a requirement when a fire department member finds him- or herself requiring immediate assistance. Lastly, the committee rewrote Chapters 11 and 12, both of which concern fire fighter health and wellness and exposure to atypical stressful events.

For the 2018 edition, the committee made several significant updates, including ruling out the approved use of external riding positions in wildland apparatus from Section 14.4 of NFPA 1906, *Standard for Wildland Fire Apparatus*. The committee also chose to strengthen the language prohibiting riding on any external section of an apparatus and requiring all occupants to be seat belted in vehicles. Also included was a section requiring the provision of appropriately fitted ballistic protection for any department members who respond to and/or are exposed to risks during civil unrest, active shooter incidents, or similar events where there are reasonably foreseen threats. Language requiring unified command for the purpose of managing incidents was revised and strengthened. The committee was reviewing research projects being conducted for the next revisions of the standard, but because these projects were incomplete, revisions were not made to this 2018 edition. Some of those research projects concern PPE, fire department apparatus, and respiratory protection. The committee included new requirements for the training, use, and limitations of PPE. The committee developed new requirements to include not only the ensemble but also ensemble elements, which would include anything that has been added to the ensemble as part of the requirements. The cleaning and care of PPE as well as station/work uniforms was also addressed with new or updated requirements. Lastly, as with the 2013 edition, the committee rewrote Chapters 11 and 12, both of which cover fire fighter health and wellness and exposure to atypical stressful events, an ever-evolving area.

For the 2021 edition, the technical committee has used the latest research and information about cleaning of equipment and personnel to enhance those sections of the standard. In Chapter 14, the term *preliminary exposure reduction* provides requirements that include science-based techniques for fire departments and their members to clean equipment and themselves after an exposure to a routine fire incident. Preliminary exposure reduction is separate from decontamination from a hazardous materials incident. Along those lines, the technical committee added more exposure reporting and tracking requirements for members and departments. It is intended that these requirements will create detailed records for members of when and how long they were exposed to contaminants — records that could assist in future research, medical needs, diagnoses, and more.

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**Committee Scope:** This Committee shall have primary responsibility for documents on occupational safety and incident command in the working environment of the fire service, not including hazardous materials or cross functional events. The committee shall also have responsibility for documents related to medical requirements for firefighters, and the professional qualifications for fire department safety officer. It shall coordinate its work with NFPA technical committees dealing with emergency responder safety and wellness.



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# NFPA 1500

## Standard on

# Fire Department Occupational Safety, Health, and Wellness Program

2021 Edition

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Information on referenced and extracted publications can be found in Chapter 2 and Annex G.

## Chapter 1 Administration

**1.1 Scope.** This standard shall contain minimum requirements for a fire service–related occupational safety, health, and wellness program.

### 1.2 Purpose.

**1.2.1** The purpose of this standard shall be to specify the minimum requirements for an occupational safety, health, and wellness program for a fire department.

**1.2.2** This standard shall specify safety requirements for those members involved in rescue, fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials operations, special operations, fire investigations, fire inspections, and related activities.

**1.2.3\*** The authority having jurisdiction shall identify which performance objectives of this standard existing programs or policies meet.

**1.2.4** Nothing herein shall be intended to restrict any jurisdiction from exceeding these minimum requirements.

### 1.3 Application.

**1.3.1** The requirements of this standard shall be applicable to organizations providing rescue, fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials mitigation, special operations, fire investigations, fire inspections, and other emergency services, including public, military, private, and industrial fire departments.

**1.3.2** This standard shall not apply to industrial fire brigades that might also be known as emergency brigades, emergency response teams, fire teams, plant emergency organizations, or mine emergency response teams.

### 1.4 Equivalency.

**1.4.1\*** The authority having jurisdiction shall be permitted to approve an equivalent level of qualifications for the requirements specified in Chapter 5 of this standard.

**1.4.2** The fire department shall provide technical documentation to demonstrate equivalency.

### 1.5 Adoption Requirements.

**1.5.1\*** When this standard is adopted by a jurisdiction, the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) shall set a date or dates for achieving compliance with the requirements of this standard.

**1.5.2\*** The AHJ shall be permitted to establish a phase-in schedule for compliance with specific requirements of this standard.

**1.5.3** The fire department shall adopt a risk management plan as specified in Section 4.2 of this standard.

**1.5.3.1** This risk management plan shall include a written plan for compliance with this standard.

## Chapter 2 Referenced Publications

**2.1 General.** The documents or portions thereof listed in this chapter are referenced within this standard and shall be considered part of the requirements of this document.

**2.2 NFPA Publications.** National Fire Protection Association, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169-7471.

NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 96, *Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations*, 2017 edition.

NFPA 101®, *Life Safety Code®*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 472, *Standard for Competence of Responders to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 473, *Standard for Competencies for EMS Personnel Responding to Hazardous Materials/Weapons of Mass Destruction Incidents*, 2018 edition.

NFPA 1001, *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1002, *Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*, 2017 edition.

NFPA 1003, *Standard for Airport Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*, 2019 edition.

NFPA 1006, *Standard for Technical Rescue Personnel Professional Qualifications*, 2017 edition.

NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, 2020 edition.

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NFPA 1033, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*, 2014 edition.

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NFPA 1561, *Standard on Emergency Services Incident Management System and Command Safety*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1581, *Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program*, 2015 edition.

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NFPA 1583, *Standard on Health-Related Fitness Programs for Fire Department Members*, 2015 edition.

NFPA 1584, *Standard on the Rehabilitation Process for Members During Emergency Operations and Training Exercises*, 2015 edition.

NFPA 1670, *Standard on Operations and Training for Technical Search and Rescue Incidents*, 2017 edition.

NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1851, *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles for Structural Fire Fighting and Proximity Fire Fighting*, 2020 edition.

NFPA 1852, *Standard on Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)*, 2019 edition.

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NFPA 3000™, *Standard for an Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response (ASHER) Program*, 2021 edition.

## 2.3 Other Publications.

**2.3.1 ANSI Publications.** American National Standards Institute, Inc., 25 West 43rd Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036.

ANSI Z87.1, *Practice for Occupational and Educational Eye and Face Protection*, 2003.

ANSI Z88.2, *Practices for Respiratory Protection*, 1992.

ANSI 107, *American National Standard for High-Visibility Safety Apparel and Accessories*, 2015.

**2.3.2 UL Publications.** Underwriters Laboratories Inc., 333 Pfingsten Road, Northbrook, IL 60062-2096.

UL 325, *ANSI/CAN/UL Standard for Door, Drapery, Gate, Louver, and Window Operators and Systems*, 2017.