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## Report of the Week

PPE today, PPE tomorrow, PPE always

6/20/08

### Report Number: 05-578

Report Date: 10/15/2005 0041

### Demographics

Department type: Paid Municipal

Job or rank: Fire Fighter

Department shift: Other

Age: 34 - 42

Years of fire service experience: 17 - 20

Region: FEMA Region IX

Service Area: Suburban

### Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 10/14/2005 2000

Hours into the shift: 9 - 12

Event participation: Involved in the event

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What do you believe caused the event?

- Individual Action
- Other
- Training Issue

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Minor injury

### Event Description

While extinguishing a vehicle fire, fire fighter opened driver door and started to reach for the hood release knob under the dash. Fire fighter was wearing full turnouts and helmet, but not an SCBA or face mask. Just as fire fighter was reaching for the knob, the inside of the vehicle flashed, causing the fire fighter to back away from the vehicle. The engine compartment of the vehicle was fully involved with fire, and the passenger compartment was not. The fire fighter did not see any flames in the passenger area of the vehicle, and thus felt safe to reach into the area to release the hood latch. This incident reminded me of the importance using all of our PPE's, including SCBA and facemask, on vehicle fires. The flashover of the vehicle compartment had the potential of injuring the fire fighter.

### Lessons Learned

Always wear all PPE's, including SCBA and mask on all vehicle fires. Personnel without proper PPE's should not enter the operational area.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. What is your department's PPE requirement for fighting a vehicle fire?
2. Do you adhere to that requirement on all vehicle fire incidents?
3. What element of the requirement do you adhere to most and why?
4. What element of the requirement do you ignore most and why?
5. What "informal" SOPs do you abide by when fighting a vehicle fire?

*Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.*