

## **FIRE FIGHTERS GUIDANCE NOTE # 4 -13**

### **ISSUE: PERSONAL PROTECTION DURING FIRE INVESTIGATION OPERATIONS**

Following extinguishment of fires, incomplete combustion will create a hazardous atmosphere. This places personnel involved in operations such as overhaul and fire cause determination, at risk of exposure to these contaminants.

Whenever possible, investigations should be delayed until such time as all phases of fire have been fully extinguished. Adequate and effective ventilation should also be in place throughout the investigation.

Further, those involved in fire investigations should ensure that either the immediate vicinity or the entire area is de-energized, also, that the natural gas, propane or other fuel sources are isolated, disconnected, or shut-off.

Fire Departments should ensure that all personnel within a potentially contaminated atmosphere wear adequate respiratory protection. CSA Z-94.4-02 –“Selection, Use and Care of Respirators” should be consulted by the fire department when developing and implementing a respiratory protection program.

Where SCBA or other types of respiratory protection are provided to fire investigation personnel, fire departments should ensure that appropriate training is provided on the safe and effective use of the equipment.

Before respiratory protection is removed, personnel should take every reasonable precaution to ensure that the atmosphere is safe to work in (e.g. air monitoring to determine the presence of common contaminants).

In addition to respiratory protection, a number of personal safety precautions should be observed by those involved in fire investigation. Fire departments should ensure that the following Guidance Notes are followed:

- GN #2-7 Reporting Exposures to Biological, Chemical or Physical Agents
- GN #4-2 Eye Protection
- GN #4-3 Structural Firefighting Boots and Gloves
- GN #4-9 Respiratory Protection Program
- GN #4-12 Firefighter Head Protection (Structural Firefighting)
- GN #6-23 Safety During Salvage and Overhaul