

6 Steps to Clean Firefighting Footwear



The entire fire service industry recognizes that soiled or contaminated protective clothing can expose firefighters to toxic substances, spread communicable disease, absorb heat, conduct electricity, and can be flammable. In short, clean PPE can help keep you safe.

NFPA 1851 requires the user to evaluate PPE after each use to determine the appropriate cleaning level. This includes instructions for cleaning at the scene and an advanced cleaning at least once a year or whenever on-scene cleaning is not sufficient. Here are six steps to assist in cleaning your footwear.

1. CLEAN BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE SCENE

Gently brush or lightly sponge off footwear to remove the large, gross contaminants following overhaul. This on-scene cleaning greatly reduces the amount of particles you take into the rig and the firehouse bay. If an on-scene cleaning doesn't do the job, the footwear requires an advanced cleaning.

NOTE: Step 1 constitutes an on-scene cleaning that should be done at the scene. Steps 2 through 6 constitute an advanced cleaning, done at least once a year or when on-scene cleaning is not sufficient.



2. INSPECT

Wear exam gloves and eye protection during this process. Note any physical damage that will need to be addressed before the footwear is returned to service.



3. WASH

For normal cleaning, use a soft sponge or rag with warm water to remove surface dirt on the exterior of the boot, and then rinse thoroughly.

For an advanced cleaning, a very mild dishwashing detergent should be used sparingly and then the footwear rinsed off as soon as possible. It is permissible to use a soft bristle brush to scrub any dirt or debris off the surface. Do not submerge the boots into water.

For cleaning the interior of the boots, fill the boot about three-quarters full with warm water and a mild detergent. Use a soft sponge or rag and scrub the interior of the boot, then rinse with clean warm water.



4. RE-INSPECT

Once the boots have been through the cleaning process, inspect again and if not clean, repeat Step 3.



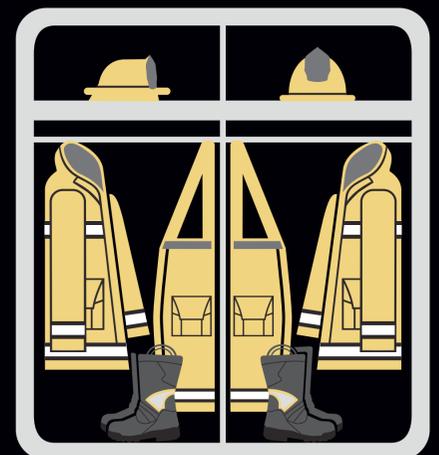
5. DRYING

Dry the boots in an area with good ventilation; never dry in direct sunlight. Footwear should never be machine dried using equipment that produces mechanical action by tumbling or agitation. It is imperative that the boots be allowed to thoroughly dry before returning to service.



6. STORAGE

Store clean footwear in a dry, well-ventilated area out of direct sunlight and away from indoor light sources, which can also produce harmful UV rays. Do not store in extreme hot or cold temperatures, nor in airtight containers.



ONLINE RESOURCES

MSAfire.com/Globe | PPE101.com | NFPA.org

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