

# How Cleaning and Storage Practices Protect You (and Those Around You).



**1 Why is gross decon on-scene important after a fire call?** Soot contains dangerous chemicals and carcinogens that cling to gear and off-gases for long periods of time, which is harmful to you and those around you. However, much of this contamination can be washed off on-scene with **soap, water, and an industrial scrub brush.**



**2 Why should firefighters use a wet wipe to clean their skin after a fire response?** The neck, face, and hands are highly susceptible to soot exposure, making these the easiest places for fireground substances to meet the skin. **Using a wet wipe on-scene** after response helps clean these areas of harmful substances before they get absorbed into the body.



**3 Why is it important to put dirty gear in a sealed bag outside of a cab or personal vehicle?** Gear exposed to harmful fireground chemicals can continue to off-gas, putting firefighters at risk if kept in the cab of a vehicle. Placing the PPE in a **sealed bag or container separated from the firefighter** eliminates this exposure risk.



**4 Why should firefighters shower within an hour of fire response and change into a new set of clothes?** Skin and clothes can absorb toxic chemicals and carcinogens from the fire scene, which can then continue to off-gas, putting the firefighter at risk. It is important to **wash these particles off** the body as **soon as possible** and change into a fresh set of clothes.

Learn more in the Lavender Ribbon Report  
at [www.nvfc.org/lrr](http://www.nvfc.org/lrr).

