HEIMAN PPE CARE & MAINTENANCE
FEBRUARY 2026

NFPA 1850

Advanced Cleaning, Advanced Inspections Verification of Contaminant Removal

Insights for Fire Chiefs, Officers & Volunteer Departments

The New Standard NFPA Overview

Transitioning to Unified Standard for Firefighter Safety

The transition to the NFPA 1850 standard (2026 Edition) represents the most significant shift in fire service equipment management in over two decades, fundamentally altering the landscape of firefighter safety and health. By successfully consolidating the previously independent standards of NFPA 1851—which governed the Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Protective Ensembles—and NFPA 1852—which governed the Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)—the National Fire Protection Association has created a holistic, unified roadmap for life-safety equipment. This consolidation is not merely an administrative change; it is a response to the growing body of scientific evidence linking chronic fireground exposures to long-term health complications, including various forms of occupational cancer and respiratory illness. Under the new NFPA 1850 framework, the industry moves toward a "Total Health" philosophy where the structural integrity of the garment and the mechanical reliability of the breathing apparatus are viewed as a single, integrated life-support system. This standard mandates a more rigorous approach to documentation, requiring departments to maintain granular records of every exposure, cleaning cycle, and repair event throughout the equipment's lifecycle. Furthermore, NFPA 1850 introduces specialized language regarding the mitigation of emerging threats, such as the toxic byproducts associated with lithium-ion battery fires and the persistence of "forever chemicals" like PFAS in protective textiles. By adopting these unified protocols, fire departments can ensure that their personnel are protected by gear that is not only physically intact but chemically decontaminated to the highest possible degree. For leadership, compliance with NFPA 1850 serves as a critical pillar of risk management, ensuring that the organization meets the current legal and safety benchmarks for modern emergency services and personnel safety.

The PPE Manager Role

Departments are now required to designate a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Manager. This isn't just a title; it is a role responsible for the lifecycle documentation of every asset.

Consolidated Risk Assessments

Organizations must now perform a unified assessment that considers how turnout gear and SCBA interface together under extreme thermal stress.

Terminology Updates

"Cleaning" is now more strictly defined, moving toward "Verification of Contaminant Removal" to ensure cancer-causing particulates are actually gone, not just moved around.



Verified Excellence in Advanced Maintenance



> NFPA 1850 is a commitment to firefighter health. By unifying PPE and SCBA care, we are reducing toxic burdens on our personnel and ensuring every member returns home as healthy as when they started their shift.
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> **Michelle Shumaker**
> Operations Manager

Why Verification Matters

As an industry-leading Independent Service Provider (ISP), Heiman Fire Equipment stands at the forefront of the NFPA 1850 standard, providing the specialized expertise required to maintain the structural and thermal integrity of your department's most critical assets. The transition to the 2026 consolidated standard places a significant burden of proof on the "Verified ISP" to ensure that every repair and inspection is performed with surgical precision and documented with absolute transparency. Our facility is engineered to meet these rigorous requirements, utilizing advanced diagnostic tools that go far beyond simple visual assessments. A cornerstone of our service is the Advanced Inspection process, which is mandated by NFPA 1850 at minimum twelve-month intervals or whenever a routine inspection identifies potential degradation. This deep-dive evaluation includes the specialized "Light Box" test to identify microscopic breaches in the moisture barrier and the "Suter Test" or Hydrostatic Leakage Test, which subjects the garment's barrier to pressurized liquid to ensure it still prevents the ingress of bloodborne pathogens and hazardous chemicals. Furthermore, our repair department is staffed by master technicians who utilize only manufacturer-approved, flame-resistant materials, including Nomex® thread and specialized fabric patches that maintain the original Thermal Protective Performance (TPP) and Total Heat Loss (THL) ratings of the ensemble. By utilizing Heiman's verified services, departments mitigate the immense liability associated with improper gear maintenance. We provide a complete digital paper trail for every asset, tracking the repair history from the initial intake to the final quality control check. This level of oversight ensures that when a firefighter enters a high-heat environment, their gear performs exactly as the manufacturer intended, providing a vital layer of protection against both immediate thermal threats and long-term health risks associated with equipment failure or contamination.

Action Oriented

Neutralizing the Invisible Threat: NFPA 1850 Advanced Cleaning & Inspections

Despite the clear directives within the consolidated NFPA 1850 standard, many fire departments continue to operate with fragmented care and maintenance programs that fail to address the cumulative risks of modern firefighting. The primary challenge lies in the invisible nature of contemporary threats; while visible charring or mechanical failure in an SCBA is easily identified, the buildup of carcinogenic particulates and the degradation of moisture barriers often go unnoticed until a catastrophic failure or long-term illness occurs.

This gap in safety oversight creates a significant liability for municipalities and a life-threatening hazard for the personnel on the front lines. Without a unified, professional approach to Selection, Care, and Maintenance (SCM), gear that appears functional may actually be providing a false sense of security, leaving firefighters vulnerable to thermal breakthrough, bloodborne pathogens, and toxic chemical absorption.



Disconnected Analytics



62%

Occupational Illnesses

Where's the Data?

The Data Gap in Asset Management many departments still rely on manual logs or disparate software systems to track PPE and SCBA data. This lack of integration prevents a clear view of equipment age, repair history, and exposure frequency. Under NFPA 1850, this data is now mandatory for legal compliance. Heiman bridges this gap by providing verified ISP documentation that ensures every asset is tracked from issuance to retirement

Proposed Solution

Our solution is a verified SCM partnership. By outsourcing inspections and repairs to Heiman, departments ensure NFPA 1850 compliance and protect personnel health.

Overcoming Compliance Barriers:

• Funding Gaps: Balancing the cost of annual advanced inspections against tight municipal budgets.
•Recordkeeping: Managing the granular data required for individual SCBA and PPE exposure logs.
•Technical Expertise: Keeping internal staff trained on the specific moisture barrier testing and SCBA flow-testing required by the 2026 consolidation.

Implementation Plan

Lifecycle & Compliance

The final stage of an NFPA 1850 program is the transition from service to safe retirement. The 2026 standard requires a granular digital paper trail for every asset. Heiman provides the infrastructure needed to maintain these records precisely.

Data & Asset Tracking

Our tracking systems ensure every inspection and repair is logged against a unique ID, providing a cradle-to-grave history. This data is vital during health audits to prove that gear is chemically decontaminated and structurally sound for use.

The Ten-Year Rule

The standard is uncompromising on the ten-year retirement rule. Even pristine gear must be removed from service after a decade, as the chemical bonds in aramid fibers degrade over time, losing the ability to protect against thermal energy.

Environmental Storage

Proper storage is a critical pillar of NFPA 1850 compliance. Gear must be kept away from UV light and exhaust fumes to prevent premature fiber breakdown. Heiman's assessments help ensure your station lockers meet these ventilation requirements.

Specialized Sanitization

When gear is exposed to lithium-ion battery fires or biohazards, standard washing isn't enough. Heiman provides specialized cleaning services that verify the removal of toxic particulates, ensuring the gear is safe for the next interior fire.

The Heiman Partnership

Heiman assists with fleet assessments and budget forecasting, allowing leadership to plan replacement cycles. We handle the technical complexities of gear integrity, so you can focus on the mission of fire suppression and protecting your members.