

## ADVISORY REGARDING NEW FEDERAL REGULATIONS ON HIGH VISIBILITY GARMENTS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Federal Government has established a regulation mandating the use of high-visibility safety apparel for emergency services workers. This law becomes effective on November 24 2008. The Federal Highway Administration, Worker Visibility Final Rule (23 CFR Part 634) can be examined in the Federal Register (Vol. 71, No. 226, 24 November 2006) at: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2006/pdf/E6-19910.pdf>.

EMS and fire service personnel are specifically referenced by the rule. The rule requires emergency workers to wear a minimum of an ANSI class II high visibility vest during operations in and alongside a public roadway. ANSI class II vests have either a high visibility green or high visibility orange/red background with reflective striping. ANSI class III garments provide more visibility than class II and are acceptable alternatives.

Firefighter turnout gear does not meet the requirement; neither do most EMS coats - even those with reflective trim. Also many of the vests that have been used by emergency services workers in the past do not meet the ANSI standards. To access the International Safety Equipment Association's (ISEA) guide to the ANSI 107-2004 standard go to: <http://www.safetysupply.com/hivisstd.htm>.

UPDATE – December 2008 – A recent ruling allows firefighters or other emergency responders working in the roadway “engaged in emergency operations that directly expose them to flame, fire, heat, and/or hazardous materials” to wear turn-out gear with reflective trim.



**Class I vest – INADEQUATE!**



**Class II vest Orange - OKAY**



**Class II vest Green – OKAY**

This information is being distributed to NH EMS agencies for informational purposes only. The NH Department of Safety, Division of Fire Standards and Training and EMS is an advocate for provider safety, and strongly recommends that public safety agencies comply with these federal regulations. The Division does not intend to engage in enforcement activities to ensure compliance.

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