For Immediate Release

South King Fire Designs Gown as Alternative PPE Source

Open-source pattern available, production help sought

Federal Way, WA. April 6th, 2020 12:00 PST: Nationally and locally, adequate personal protective equipment PPE supplies are uncertain, yet the requests for service continue. In response, South King Fire and Rescue’s internal COVID-19 Task Force has designed and manufactured a disposable gown made from construction house wrap material to use as alternative PPE in the event normal PPE supply chains are interrupted.

“Gowns are the most limited resource we have right now. I thought of material that is readily available and meets the intent of splash protection.” said Lt. Jan Nielsen, Health and Safety Advisor, SKFR COVID-19 Task Force.

Lt. Nielsen shared his idea with SKFR’s taskforce and enlisted the help of SKFR Firefighter/Engineer Jim Wilson. Wilson created a prototype, and a disposable gown was sewn in a matter of minutes. The Lowe’s Home Improvement store in Federal Way donated contractor grade “House Wrap” that is used in the construction industry as a moisture barrier, and Wilson crafted a final product.

SKFR is now evaluating this gown as a supplement to the current surgical gowns firefighters are wearing while responding to possible COVID-19 patients within our district. Lt. Greg Willett, SKFR’s Hazardous Materials Technical Safety Officer, determined, based on the CDC’s Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Isolation Gowns, that the use of this construction-grade house wrap is appropriate as an alternative disposable gown material. These gowns are an example of planning for a worst-case scenario given the event that SKFR’s PPE channels are disrupted and unavailable.

SKFR’s Information Technology (I.T.) division created a digitized, open-sourced pattern of the gown. Due to limits for gown production, SKFR is asking outside organizations to consider joining in the manufacturing of the gowns.

Contact SKFR’s public information office for inquiries and digitalized pattern copies.

“We set the standard for quality fire and emergency services by applying strategic thinking, leadership development, and innovation to maintain financial responsibility and public trust.”