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Subject: Care and Maintenance of Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Units

RESPIRATOR USER NOTICE

Recently, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health received numerous reports of issues concerning SCBA respirators suspected of not meeting the necessary NIOSH performance requirements. We have observed that SCBA problems often can be attributed to a lack of, or improperly performed, preventative maintenance. Correct inspection, maintenance, and service procedures are all vital to ensure proper SCBA operation.

Users of SCBA units must pay close attention to the instructions for proper care and maintenance issued by the SCBA manufacturer. Maintenance procedures and training are unique to each respirator manufacturer and model; therefore, any equipment changes to the original respirator configuration may entail new training and maintenance requirements. Additionally, manufacturers are required to update the training and maintenance manual if an equipment modification impacts the use or maintenance of the respiratory assembly. *NFPA 1852 Standard of Selection, Care & Maintenance of Open-Circuit Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)* provides guidance that can be followed to ensure the continued efficient operation of SCBA.

Another important aspect is to identify the operations that must be performed by trained and certified technicians as part of the maintenance cycle in accordance with the manufacturer instructions. These specific operations should not be performed by any person who has not been trained and certified on the specific model. Firefighters should also be trained to identify, during their daily inspections, the signs that indicate an SCBA unit should be removed from service and examined by a certified technician.