DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Phone: 412-386-4000
Fax: 412-386-4051

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
National Institute for Occupational
Safety and Health (NIOSH)
National Personal Protective
Technology Laboratory (NPPTL)
626 Cochrans Mill Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15236

March 12, 2003

LETTER TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Announcement of Public Meetings to be held on April 10, 2003, and April 24, 2003, to Discuss the Approval of Respiratory Devices Used to Protect Workers in Hazardous Environments

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) is planning to conduct public stakeholder meetings on April 10, 2003, from 8:00 – 11:30 a.m. at the Marriott Key Bridge Hotel, 1401 Lee Highway, Arlington, Virginia, and on April 24, 2003, from 8:00 – 11:30 a.m. at the Colorado School of Mines, 1500 Illinois Street, Golden, Colorado.

NIOSH, in consultation with the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), is in the process of developing a proposed rule on the performance and reliability requirements of close-circuit self-contained escape breathing apparatus. Examples include self-contained self-rescuers (SCSRs) as used in the mining industry and emergency escape breathing apparatus (EEBD). The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for an exchange of information between the Agency and respirator manufacturers, industry representatives, labor representatives, and others with an interest in respiratory protection. Attendees will be given an opportunity to ask questions; submit verbal and written comments they wish to have included in the regulatory record; and provide individual input into potential changes to the applicable regulations and policies. A formal notice of these meetings will be posted on the Federal Register in the near future.

NIOSH has not determined the final content of its proposed rulemaking but is considering the regulatory actions listed below. NIOSH is specifically asking for comments on these proposed actions, but would also welcome comments on additional areas that the commenters believe may need to be addressed.

NIOSH is considering:

(1.) Proposing to use Breathing and Metabolic Simulators (BMS) to uniformly evaluate the life support performance of these respirators. The intent is to uniformly classify protection according to the length of time that the apparatus provides a breathable gas supply, measuring that performance to depletion. It is further proposed to retain certain elements of human subject testing;

(2.) Proposing new ruggedness and reliability requirements such as a minimum shock and vibration standards, and means for unambiguous determination of continued functionality at the approved level;

(3.) Proposing new safety requirements such as fire and explosion risk assessments to assure that the units do not introduce any new hazards in the deployment environment;

(4.) Proposing to require the inclusion of fog resistant eye protection from gas and vapor hazards;

(5.) Proposing to require post-deployment audits of approved apparatus;

(6.) Proposing to require unit registration as a condition of certification.

Interested parties should make hotel reservations directly with the Marriott Key Bridge (703-524-6400 / 800-327-9789) in Arlington, Virginia, before the cut-off date of April 3, 2003, or the Golden Hotel (303-279-0100 / 800-233-7214) in Golden, Colorado, before the cut-off date of April 11, 2003, referencing the NIOSH/NPPTL Public Meeting. Interested parties may confirm their attendance to either meeting by completing the enclosed registration form and forwarding it by fax (304-285-4459) to the Event Management Office, or obtaining an electronic registration form from the NIOSH Homepage (www.cdc.gov/niosh) by selecting Conferences, event, and then e-mailing (confserv@netl.doe.gov) the form to the Event Management Office.

Requests to make presentations at the public meeting should be mailed to the NIOSH Docket Officer, Robert A. Taft Laboratories, M/S C34, 4676 Columbia Parkway, Cincinnati, Ohio 45226, Telephone 513-533-8303, Fax 513-533-8285, E-mail niocindocket@cdc.gov. All requests to present should contain the name, address, telephone number, relevant business affiliations of the presenter, a brief summary of the presentation, and the approximate time requested for the presentation. Oral presentations should be limited to 15 minutes.

After reviewing the requests for presentation, NIOSH will notify each presenter of the approximate time that their presentation is scheduled to begin. If a participant is not present when their presentation is scheduled to begin, the remaining participants will be heard in order. At the conclusion of the meeting, an attempt will be made to allow presentations by any scheduled participants who missed their assigned times. Attendees who wish to speak but did not submit a request for the opportunity to make a presentation may be given the opportunity at the conclusion of the meeting, at the discretion of the presiding officer. NIOSH also invites all interested parties to schedule individual stakeholder meetings.

For further information, contact the Event Management Office, P.O. Box 880, 3610 Collins Ferry Road, Morgantown, WV 26507, Telephone 304-285-4750, Fax 304-285-4459, E-mail confserv@netl.doe.gov.

Sincerely yours,

for Roland J. Berry Ann
Acting Branch Chief
Respirator Branch
National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory

Enclosure

NIOSH/NPPTL/RESPIRATOR BRANCH/REHAK/EG&G/BELL/03/03/2003
Spelling Verified by: EG&G

bcc:
RB Reading File
Notebook for "Letter to All Manufacturers"

Concur:

Acting Branch Chief, RB _____ _____
Section Chief, CE&T, RB _____ _____
Acting Section Chief, P&SD, RB _____ _____
Acting Section Chief, LTFE, RB _____ _____