National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory

Reevaluation of the NIOSH policy on emergency escape support breathing system or “buddy-breather” device used with open-circuit self-contained breathing apparatus

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Topic Presentations

- NIOSH Presentation
- Requested Presentations
- Panel Discussion
- Comment Period
NIOSH Presentation Topics

- Meeting Objective
- Topic Background
NIOSH, National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) is currently reevaluating the NIOSH policy stated in the letter dated November 6, 1984. Subject: Notice to all respirator manufacturers with MSHA/NIOSH Approved Respirators.
Meeting Objective

Input Sought from Manufacturers and Other Stakeholders:

- Viewpoints and experience on the current policy
- What research has already been completed related to the current policy
- What, if any research is needed to support rescinding, reaffirming, or modifying this policy
- Recommendations on SCBA technology and performance enhancements that would enhance user safety during the emergency use of a buddy-breathing device
- Viewpoints on minimum performance standard requirements and test procedures that could be used to evaluate an emergency escape support breathing system
- Other comments on the subject
• Concern Raised by NFPA Technical Committee for Respiratory Protection

• Including requirements for “buddy-breathing” in a fire service training standard would result in using a NIOSH and NFPA compliant SCBA in an unapproved configuration
Topic Background

The OSHA Regulation 29 CFR 1910.156 Fire Brigade Standard in paragraph (f)(1)(iii) states:

“Approved self-contained breathing apparatus may be equipped with either a “buddy-breathing” device or a quick disconnect valve, even if these devices are not certified by NIOSH. If these accessories are used, they shall not cause damage to the apparatus, or restrict the air flow of the apparatus, or obstruct the normal operation of the apparatus.”
A key disadvantage in buddy breathing is that it is extremely difficult for two people to leave a hazardous atmosphere quickly while engaged in buddy breathing, simultaneously consuming air at a faster rate.

"Virtually all buddy breathing procedures require compromising the rescuer's SCBA and, for this reason, cannot be condoned."

- NFPA 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, 2007 Edition

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- NFPA 1500 Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety and Health Program, 2007 Edition
  - "The risk of both victim and rescuer exhausting their air supplies is another scenario associated with buddy breathing. In this case, what starts out as a rescuer-victim relationship ends up a victim-victim relationship, as the shared air supply is exhausted before exiting is possible."

- "NFPA, ANSI, IAFF, and most SCBA manufacturers do not recommend buddy breathing because it compromises one or more SCBA and can result in the needless impairment or death of either the rescuer or the victim, or both."
Information Docket

SCBA emergency escape support breathing system or “buddy-breather”

- Mail:
  - NIOSH Docket Office
  - Robert A. Taft Laboratories, M/S C 34
  - CRU – NIOSH 147
  - 4676 Columbia Parkway
  - Cincinnati, OH 45226

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- NPPTL Web Site: http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl