

Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

From: asstchief20@nycap.rr.com
Sent: Wednesday, December 29, 2010 1:04 PM
To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)
Cc: Chen, Jihong (Jane) (CDC/NIOSH/EID) (CTR)
Subject: 147 - Reevaluation of the NIOSH policy on emergency escape support breathing system or buddy-breather device used with open-circuit self-contained breathing apparatus Comments

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Comments

I support the reasoning behind the reevaluation by NIOSH on the use of the "buddy breathing" system. The first thing that firefighters are taught are the three priorities of an incident, with the first and foremost being life safety and the fact that your individual life safety is always first and foremost. The use of the "buddy breathing" system compromises the individual life safety of the rescuer. While it is understandable the compassion that one firefighter feels towards another and the willingness to share your air with another who may be trapped and out of air, there are other ways to help those individuals that would not compromise the individual air supply of the rescuer. Technological advances in FAST or RIT packs (external air supply) carried by a rescuer or team of rescuers provide the same hookups and capability to a firefighter in need without compromising the rescuers own life safety. If a RIT or FAST pack is not available an alternative method that can be accomplished after having performed some training of firefighters is to change depleted bottles out of the existing SCBA with a fresh bottle in a hazardous atmosphere. Once again this method does not compromise the air supply of the rescuer.

I would suggest that SCBA only be NIOSH approved with a single male receptical and hose for attachment to an external RIT or FAST pack with a female fitting so that an emergency air supply could be used. It would eliminate the female adapter off of current SCBA units therefore taking away the potential of one firefighter supplying another off of their SCBA.

I would suggest that the male attachment points on the SCBA be located in two places one on the chest of the SCBA and one at the rear of the SCBA.

This would give two options for a trapped or down firefighter to receive a life supporting supply of air from an external emergency supply of air. It would also be a backup in case one of the male adapters were damaged during use or due to an incident while operating in a hazardous atmosphere. My reasoning for a male adapter on the SCBA is that a rubber cover could be placed on the adapter to protect it from damage while also keeping debris out of it. Female ends I feel are more difficult to keep debris and liquids out of which could be a hazard when trying to connect the emergency supply of air in a hazardous atmosphere. The external emergency air supply would not be subjected to prolonged exposure to debris and liquids if stored correctly and only used when needed during training and rescues should it be needed. Overall discontinuance and NIOSH approval of components of the "Buddy breathing system would take away a life saving option however a modification to the existing system takes away the life safety hazard of the rescuer hooking into another firefighters SCBA while still allowing an external emergency air supply to be used. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments and suggestions in regards to this very important issue.