



Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention (CDC)  
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## LETTER TO ALL RESPIRATOR MANUFACTURERS

The National Institute for the Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approves gas masks with carbon monoxide (CO) protection for escape purposes under subpart I of Title 42, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 84 (42 CFR 84) and Statement of Standard for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Air-Purifying Escape Respirators (APER). A policy statement, dated November 20, 1996, was written describing an additional test to be imposed for devices in which the temperature of the effluent gas reaches 100° C during required, constant-flow testing. The policy statement established a maximum allowable breakthrough concentration of 10 ppm carbon monoxide during the additional test.

NIOSH has revisited this policy and believes that the breakthrough concentration of 10 ppm incorrectly accounted for the fit factor of the respirator and was therefore too conservative. The breakthrough concentration is now established at the current NIOSH REL of 35 ppm. This change does not affect previously certified carbon monoxide respirators.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 412-386-4000.

Sincerely,

Heinz W. Ahlers  
Chief, Technical Evaluation Branch  
National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory