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Subject: Mine Operator Annual Testing of Self-Contained Self-Rescuer (SCSR) Units

RESPIRATOR USER NOTICE

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) jointly issue certificates of approval for SCSR units. The approval is granted after the respirator has been evaluated and found to be in compliance with all of the requirements of the NIOSH regulations in Title 42, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 84. The requirements include the presence of User's Instructions and Service Life Plan prepared by the manufacturer.

MSHA requires annual mine operator testing of SCSR units. Mine operators open, initiate the breathing cycle, and establish operational reliability for a representative number of SCSR units, typically 1% of the SCSRs at the mine, on an annual basis.

NIOSH has received reports of SCSR units not functioning as expected during annual mine operator testing. It is important that the operator or technician performing the annual tests pay close attention to the User's Instructions issued by the manufacturer. Operating instructions are unique to each SCSR manufacturer and model. It is equally important that testing be performed by a trained operator familiar with the operation of the unit. When the directions are not followed, it can lead to unexpected results that may not accurately reflect the operational reliability of the unit.

Additionally, NIOSH wants to remind users of important MSHA compliance requirements. Daily inspections must be made prior to taking the SCSR unit underground. External inspection should be carried out by a certified inspector. Daily and 90 day inspections are specified by each manufacturer based on the aspects of their unit. If the unit fails any of the specified inspections it is important to remove it from service immediately.