

International Association of Fire Fighters

11/19

(29)

AFFILIATED WITH AFL-CIO -- CLC



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NOVEMBER 8, 1977

DATE

Local No. 336

Regulations Assistant
NIOSH
Room 8-11
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Md. 20857

Dear Sir:

I have read with interest the announcement of the public meeting on the occupational respiratory protective devices. I understand that this meeting is to be held November 29 through December 1, 1977.

I would like very much to present a statement at the meeting, but my work schedule, with the Middletown Fire Department, prohibits this. Instead, I would like for the attached written statement to be made available to the participants. For your convenience, 10 copies of the statement are attached.

If possible, I would like to receive a copy of the verbatim record of the meeting.

Sincerely,

James K. Phillabaum
Secretary, Local #336
International Association of Fire Fighters

JKP/ep

10 extra copies

RESPIRATOR TESTING AND APPROVAL - - STATEMENT

Respiratory protective devices are among the most vital protective devices used by today's fire fighters. We all know of the hazards of the work of the fire fighter, not the least of which is respiratory tract damage. The self-contained breathing apparatus used by the fire fighter not only protects his life, but it also enables him to save other lives.

Today these "air-paks" are failing to meet several of our needs. One of these failures is due to the heavy weight of the devices. The extra stress placed upon the fire fighter by carrying these devices should be reduced. Another failure is the ease with which the tank, hoses, and harness of these devices may become entangled with debris and trap the fire fighter. Failure number three is that they do not provide air for a great enough period of time. And lastly, they greatly restrict the vision of the firefighter.

Self-contained breathing apparatus for the fire fighter should be required to be improved as follows:

1. Design the apparatus to reduce the weight carried by the fire fighter.
2. Design the apparatus in such a manner that the danger of entrapment by the device are eliminated.
3. Add to the present capacity of these devices and require "low air warning devices" on all apparatus used by fire fighters.
4. Design the facepiece for maximum vision and with the provision for the use of corrective optical lenses by the fire fighter.

Apparatus with the above improvements should be required to be issued to all fire fighters. Present devices, that fail to meet these requirements, should not be permitted to be used. The extra cost to the municipalities should not stand in the way of providing their firefighters with proper safety equipment.

James K. Phillabaum
Local #336, I.A.F.F.
Middletown, Ohio