

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION &
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

May 16, 1994

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE 94-35: NIOSH RESPIRATOR USER NOTICES, "INADVERTENT SEPARATION OF THE MASK-MOUNTED REGULATOR (MMR) FROM THE FACEPIECE ON THE MINE SAFETY APPLIANCES (MSA) COMPANY MMR SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA) AND STATUS UPDATE"

Addressees

All holders of operating licenses or construction permits for nuclear power reactors, and all licensed fuel facilities.

Purpose

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this information notice to alert addressees to two recent respirator user notices issued by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the Department of Health and Human Services concerning the unexpected separation of mask-mounted regulators from self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) facepieces during firefighting activities. It is expected that recipients will review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, as appropriate, to avoid similar problems. However, suggestions contained in this information notice are not NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required.

Description of Circumstances

On February 23, 1994, NIOSH issued a respirator user notice (Attachment 1) describing factors that can contribute to the separation of mask-mounted regulators from SCBA facepieces. The unexpected separation of a mask-mounted regulator could result in an individual being unprotected in an environment that might pose an immediate threat to the life and health of that individual. These regulators are used on mask-mounted regulator SCBA with the following NIOSH certification numbers: TC-13F-256, TC-13F-257, TC-13F-258, and TC-13F-302. The affected regulators have a quick-connect mechanism and are designated as Mine Safety Appliances Company part number 492488.

In addition, the respirator user notice applies to certain Mine Safety Appliances Company combination air-line and SCBA devices with the following certification numbers: TC-13F-266 and TC-13F-267. The affected regulators have a quick-connect mechanism and are designated as Mine Safety Appliances Company model number 7-1047-1.

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Mask-mounted regulator and combination air-line and SCBA devices with regulators that attach to the facepiece with a threaded connector are not affected by the respirator user notice.

On March 31, 1994, NIOSH issued a respirator user notice status update (Attachment 2), describing the development of a Neckstrap/Regulator-Retainer Kit by Mine Safety Appliances Company and accepted by NIOSH. This neckstrap/regulator-retainer, when properly installed, provides a lock for the regulator-to-facepiece connection. The user notice update states that this retainer must be installed on all Mine Safety Appliances Company mask-mounted regulator respirators used at temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit (F) in order to maintain the NIOSH approval. Although NIOSH believes that proper maintenance will prevent these failures in warm-weather service, NIOSH suggests continual use of the retainer to prevent further occurrences of inadvertent regulator/facepiece separation.

Licensees may wish to share this information with other potential users, such as local fire departments.

This information notice requires no specific action or written response. If you have any questions about the information in this notice, please contact the technical contacts listed below or the appropriate Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation project manager.

/s/'d by Robert F. Burnett /s/'d by Brian K. Grimes

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Attachments:

1. NIOSH Respirator User Notice - February 23, 1994
2. NIOSH Respirator User Notice (Status Update) - March 31, 1994
3. List of Recently Issued NMSS Information Notices
4. List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices