

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

METALLIC BUILDUP IN SCBA • JUNE 2024



WHAT PROMPTED THE IAFF TO ISSUE A SAFETY BULLETIN REGARDING SCBAs?

The IAFF was recently contacted by a Local that reported finding a metallic substance in its SCBA regulators, prompting the need for further investigation and safety measures. Since then, additional Locals with different manufacturers found a metallic substance in the regulator of their SCBAs.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE SUBSTANCE FOUND IN THE SCBA REGULATORS?

The substance found is metallic in nature, and independent testing of one Local's sample identified 18 different metals, some of which are known to be harmful to human health.

WHAT STEPS IS THE IAFF TAKING TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?

The IAFF is contracting an independent laboratory to test a minimum of four SCBA units identified with the substance to determine if these metals can be found in the breathing air of the user. The IAFF is also contacting the individual manufacturers for internal investigations and requesting an investigation through NIOSH's Safety Division.

WHAT SHOULD LOCALS OR DEPARTMENTS DO IF THEY FIND SUBSTANCES IN THEIR SCBA REGULATORS?

Departments should utilize licensed technicians to review their in-stock operating SCBAs. To avoid voiding warranties, these evaluations must be conducted by a member certified through the manufacturer or a licensed third party.

HOW CAN FINDINGS BE REPORTED TO THE IAFF?

Any findings of these substances should be reported to the IAFF Science and Research Team at researchteam@iaff.org. The IAFF has developed an exposure document that can be used when a member wears and operates the SCBA with identified substances.

WILL THE IAFF KEEP MEMBERS UPDATED ON THIS ISSUE?

Yes, the IAFF will continue to update the membership on the progress of the independent testing and subsequent investigations.

WHO SHOULD BE CONTACTED FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO REPORT FINDINGS?

For further information or to report findings, Local Presidents should contact the IAFF Science and Research Team at researchteam@iaff.org.