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**MSHA's Occupational Illness and
Injury Prevention Program
Health Topic**

"Filter Self-Rescue Devices"

**Your
Health
Comes
First!**

The filter self-rescue device is a small filter-type respirator designed to provide respiratory protection only against carbonmonoxide gas for a limited period of time. The device is approved for protection against carbon monoxide, such as may result from underground fires, in concentrations up to 1% by volume (10,000ppm) for a period of up to one hour. As such, the device is to be used for ESCAPE ONLY. It is required that a self-rescue device be provided and available for each worker underground. The filter self rescue device is not a self-contained nor oxygen-supplying respirator and must be used only in oxygen-containing atmospheres. Neither does the device provide protection against toxic gases other than carbon monoxide. Thus it must be emphasized that, in an underground mining emergency, the self rescue device must be used for ESCAPE ONLY.

The filter self-rescue device must be carried on the worker, attached to the mobile equipment the worker is operating, or located within 25 feet of the worker, so that it will be readily available in case of an emergency. When the device is worn in the presence of carbon monoxide, heat is generated within the device, which may become uncomfortable or even painful to the wearer, in such a case, the device must still be kept in place; otherwise, the worker would subject himself/herself to high risk of carbonmonoxide poisoning and possibly collapse and death. As indicated above, the self-rescue device is meant for ESCAPE ONLY, and is a single-use unit to be discarded after use or after the seal is broken.

There are two filter self-rescue devices approved for use in metal/nonmetal mines. The MSA W65* manufactured by Mine Safety Appliances Company, and the Drager 810* and 910* manufactured by Dragerwerk.

The operator has the responsibility of training workers in the use of filter self-rescue devices, and also of setting up and carrying out a maintenance program for the devices. The maintenance program should include both visual inspection and weighing. Weight gain indicates leakage and absorption of moisture. Each device should be weighed upon receipt from the vendor and at regular intervals thereafter. The device is weighed by first cleaning it (scrapingoff debris and wiping with a damp cloth) and then placing it on the balance. The current weight is compared with the manufacture's weight stamped on the case. A weight record should be kept for each device. In addition to regular weighing, the miner should know how to inspect the device and report defects such as a damaged case, a broken seal, or any sign that leakage has occurred. Defective devices should be removed from service immediately.

Be conscious of the filter self-rescue device available for use, that it is provided for ESCAPE ONLY. Proper use, care, and maintenance are necessary for the device to be reliable.

If you have any questions about this or any other occupational health matter, feel free to ask us. Our job is protecting your health.

Contact:

Mine Safety and Health Administration
Metal and Nonmetal Health Division
1100 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, Virginia 22209-3939

Phone: (202) 693-9630

*** Mention of specific brands is for descriptive purposes only and does not imply endorsement by MSHA.**