

NEW SOUTH WALES FIRE BRIGADES OPERATIONS BULLETIN 2007/01



SCBA procedures, checks and skills maintenance

The Manger of BA/HAZMAT, Operational Safety Coordinator, BA Training Section and technicians from the HAZMAT service centre have reviewed several incidents involving SCBA. The conclusions and recommendations from these reviews have highlighted the following issues associated with SCBA procedures, checks and skills maintenance.

1.0 Pre operational checks of SCBA before donning and at the beginning of each shift.

1.1 Under the OHS Act 2000 Section 20, it is the duty of all firefighters to perform any function that will ensure health and safety at the workplace. This includes such functions as pre operational checks on SCBA at the beginning of each shift and before donning.

1.2 As per **SOG 9.2** a pre-operational check must be performed by the wearer before entry into an unbreathable atmosphere, **irrespective of urgency**.

1.3 Table 3A in **SOG 9.3** outlines the responsibilities of all firefighters and officers with regards to routine SCBA pre-operational checks.

RESPONSIBILITY	WHEN	ACTION
Each officer and firefighter at permanently staffed stations.	Beginning of each shift.	Check SCBA allotted to them.
Appliance drivers at permanently staffed stations.	Beginning of each shift.	Check the station's extension masks.
Station Officers at retained stations with a permanent Station Officer.	Beginning of each shift.	Check all SCBA sets and extension masks at the station.
Engine Keepers or designated members at fully retained stations.	Once weekly.	Check all SCBA sets and extension masks at the station.

Table 3A SCBA Pre-operational checks

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2.0 Aligning SCBA identification numbers

- 2.1 Identification numbers are placed on all NSWFB SCBA in the following locations, back plate, medium pressure line and head harness. These three ID numbers must be the same on each set and checked daily.

The following photographs show the locations of these identification numbers.



Backplate



Medium pressure line



Head harness strap

3.0 Quarantining faulty SCBA involved in firefighter injuries or near misses

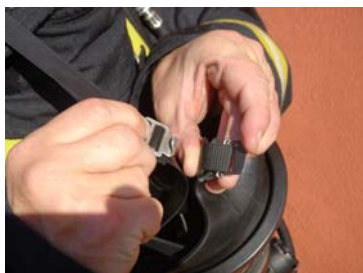
- 3.1 If a firefighter is injured or a near miss incident occurs where the SCBA is deemed to be faulty, follow the procedure outlined in [In-Order 2004/18 Equipment failures](#).
- 3.2 To assist in investigation of the incident, the SCBA with the air cylinder attached is to be left complete with the cylinder valve untouched. An entry is to be made in the station occurrence book recording the following information: SCBA ID, date, incident number, firefighters name and brigade number.
- 3.3 A NIIENMS form is to be filled out and faxed to the Health and Safety Branch and the Duty Commander within 24 hours.
- 3.4 When a SCBA is exchanged regardless of routine maintenance, service or quarantine, the form sent with the replacement SCBA set is to be filled out and faxed to the Hazmat service centre immediately.

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4.0 Maintaining integrity of SCBA equipment

4.1 When wearing the SCBA set without the facemask donned, the facemask should be secured to the neck strap. This will prevent debris or contaminants from falling into the facemask and damaging the SCBA. The facemask can be attached to the neck strap using the clips as shown in the photographs below.



BD88 facemask



Drager PA94 plus



Note: The SABRE contour facemask does not have this feature.

5.0 Skills maintenance

5.1 Firefighters are reminded of their duties under the Fire Brigades General Regulations 2003, Section 27 to carry out drills. SCBA skills maintenance includes wearing the SCBA and reviewing SCBA safe working practices a minimum of four times every 6 months.

- [STP Breathing Apparatus Topics A 4.1 – A 4.6](#)
- [SOG 9.2 Breathing Apparatus Safe Working Practices](#)
- [NSWFB Module 1.14 / 1.15 Search and Rescue / Breathing Apparatus\(Open Circuit\) Chapter 2 SCBA](#)

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6.0 Buddy checks

6.1 It is essential that buddy checks are carried out to ensure that the SCBA and PPE are correctly fitted and secure. Firefighters should be aware that protective hoods can get caught around the neckstrap or be moved during firefighting operations exposing skin around the face and chin area.



Photographs showing the areas where protective hoods may get caught.

Station Commander	A	B	C	D	Other

Contact Officer:	File Number:	Date:
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Previous Operations Bulletin: 2006/11-Clearances for aerial appliances near power lines