

HIGHLIGHT

SAVER

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Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Comparative Assessment

The Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP), a SAVER partner, is conducting a comparative assessment of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) used by emergency responders at a weapons of mass destruction scene.

SCBAs use a full facepiece connected to a source of air carried by the wearer. The SCBA provides respiratory protection in oxygen-deficient environments and in situations where high or unknown concentrations of toxic gases, vapors, or particulates are present. When using the SCBA, the user's respiratory system is isolated from the surrounding atmosphere because no outside air is admitted into the mask. There are three types of SCBAs:

- 1) open-circuit devices;
- 2) closed-circuit (re-breathing) devices; and
- 3) escape units.

The objective of the comparative assessment of SCBA for emergency responders is to improve the responder's ability to protect themselves from super lethal chemical and biological materials designed to kill or injure persons coming into contact with these agents, especially when used by terrorists. The CDP will perform a scenario driven field assessment of NIOSH CBRN approved SCBAs to evaluate preoperational requirements, employment, durability, usability, and fitting issues when used by responders wearing Class 1 personal protective equipment.

The project will be completed in November 2005.

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