

Circular number	49/2007	Date issued	30 October 2007
This circular is	For information	No response required	
This circular is	Not relevant to the National Framework		
Status	This Circular concerns face fit issues surrounding the use of 'dual purpose' facemasks with Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)		

Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Face Fit Testing

Issued by:

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Firebuy Sponsor

Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Chief Executive of the County Council
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
The Chief Fire Officer**

Please forward to:

**BA and Technical Officers
Health and Safety Officers**

Summary

This Circular provides information to FRS concerning the face fit issues surrounding the use of 'dual facemasks with SCBA in relation to the extant guidance in DCOL 2/24

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following information is being provided to both manufacturers and users alike in consideration of any possible impact on the national Respiratory Protective Equipment Project.
- 1.2 This information has been promulgated at as early a stage as practicable, following ongoing discussions with the regulatory authorities, to ensure all parties are kept informed of developments
- 1.3 This Circular relates to the face fit issues surrounding the use of 'dual purpose' facemasks with Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). These can be defined as facemasks which, as well as being used in the normal configuration with the SCBA set, can also be fitted with a respirator cartridge in place of the demand valve and the remaining elements of the SCBA set may be removed.

2.0 General Information

- 2.1 Extensive work has been undertaken by LFEPA (London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority), in conjunction with the Health & Safety Laboratories (HSL), regarding the requirement for the face fit testing of 'dual purpose' face masks in relation to the extant national guidance contained in DCOL 2/2004.
- 2.2 Discussions which took place during September 2007, between HSL and LFEPA and Firebuy representatives, resulted in the view being taken that there is now compelling evidence to support the use of the alternative procedure for face fit testing, as detailed in DCOL 2/2004, for such 'dual purpose' face masks, where the primary use is for SCBA.
- 2.3 However this position is subject to ongoing discussions and consultation between HSL and HSE, the Authority responsible for the legislation governing face fit issues.
- 2.4 If, as anticipated, these discussions are successful, the use of the existing 'DCOL' procedure for such masks in place of individual quantitative face fit testing will be considered valid and acceptable. Such acceptance, however, will be subject to a number of provisos relating to issues such as an assessment of the construction/design of mask and filters, possibly resulting in some validation exercise being necessary. In addition, the consideration of additional operational procedures for when facemasks are deployed in the respirator mode.
- 2.5 Even with such additional validation and additional procedures being necessary there is clearly a significant advantage should it be deemed that individual quantitative face fit testing for this type of facemask is unnecessary.
- 2.6 In anticipation of the possible agreement outlined above with HSE being agreed, revised guidance is in preparation, which will include measures to be adopted in respect of the face fit requirements of 'dual purpose' facemasks.
- 2.7 The revision of the guidance, as with the original DCOL, will be conducted in consultation with HSE and CFOA (Chief Fire Officers' Association) and will either be published as part of the revision to Technical Bulletin 1/97 or, as an interim measure, a Fire and Rescue Service Circular updating the guidance in DCOL 2/2004.

3.0 Further Information

- 3.1 For further information on any element of this Circular please contact either Brian Hansford or Peter Silk, Firebuy Technical Services: brian.hansford@firebuy.gov.uk or peter.silk@firebuy.gov.uk

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