



Division 02 Apparatus and Equipment

Chapter 12 – Breathing Air Unit Procedures

March 2009

POLICY

This General Order shall set forth a policy and procedure to govern the use of the Fire/EMS Department units that are designed to provide breathing air support during emergency incidents, and the refilling of County- owned cascade systems.

DEFINITIONS

Breathing Air (BA) Unit – Fire/EMS Department vehicle equipped with a breathing air compressor capable of refilling 4.5 Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) bottles and cascade systems, and equipped with spare SCBA bottles to support long duration incidents.

PROCEDURES

1. General Guidelines

All personnel are responsible to comply with the policy and procedure outlined in this General Order.

All personnel that operate a Breathing Air (BA) Unit are responsible for ensuring that he/she has been properly trained.

All station officers are responsible to ensure that the individuals that he/she supervises have received proper training and continue to operate the equipment on the BA Unit in a safe manner.

2. Emergency Incidents

A Breathing Air (BA) Unit shall be dispatched using established dispatch

sequence listings in accordance with Standard Response/Dispatch Procedures and:

- When requested by the Incident Commander.
- When information received by the dispatch supervisor indicates the need for the Unit.

Minimum staffing on a BA Unit shall be one qualified person. The Incident Commander may be required to provide additional personnel and/or an officer to support and coordinate the breathing air operations.

The BA Unit shall be positioned or staged in an area that is in close proximity to the incident. However, it shall be positioned to prevent smoke and other respiratory contaminants from affecting the safe operation of the breathing air compressor.

3. Service Calls and/or Cascade Refills

The BA Unit(s) shall only be used to refill County- owned cascade systems at fire stations and/or on units and bottles during an incident/exercise.

Service requests shall be coordinated with the station officer where the BA Unit is assigned.

In some cases, it might take three or four days before system refills can be provided. Therefore, service should be requested when the highest pressure available in the cascade system becomes 4200 PSI.

A log shall be maintained on each BA Unit documenting each service request with the operator's name, date and description of



service; i.e., “Filled station XXX cascade system to 6000 PSI,” “Filled SCBA cylinders on incident #XXXXX,” etc.

4. General Procedures

Personnel shall have been trained in the safe operation of the equipment prior to operating a BA Unit.

BA Units shall be assigned to fire stations that will provide the most effective coverage, using available personnel resources.

No repairs to the internal mechanism of any breathing air regulator shall be made on the incident scene and by anyone other than an individual with authorization from Apparatus Maintenance.

Spare 4.5 SCBA bottles from the Breathing Air Unit:

- Shall only be loaned to replace a depleted SCBA bottle until it can be refilled.
- Shall be returned to the BA Unit when the depleted SCBA unit has been refilled and, in all cases, prior to clearing the incident scene.
- Shall be clearly marked to prevent misplacing.

5. Preventative Maintenance

The Daily, Weekly and Monthly Checks shall be completed by the station personnel in accordance with the established procedures.

The chassis preventative maintenance will be coordinated by Apparatus Maintenance in accordance with the establish procedures.

Apparatus Maintenance shall be responsible for the air compressor drive engine (if applicable), air compressor and purification

system preventative maintenance performed semi-annually. Upon completion, a tag shall be maintained at the compressor containing the most recent purification filter change date and the signature of the individual performing the change.

Compressed breathing air samples shall be taken quarterly and in conjunction with purification systems’ preventative maintenance. The compressed breathing air shall meet the minimum requirements for Grade D breathing air described in ANSI/Compressed Gas Association Commodity Specification for air and tested to Grade E requirements.

A copy of the most recent air sample results shall be kept:

- On each BA Unit at all times [at least six (6) copies].
- In the vehicle file at Apparatus Maintenance.
- In the station vehicle file.

REFERENCES

ANSI/Compressed Gas Association
Commodity Specification

FORMS/ATTACHMENTS

N/A