

Press Release

No. 85 / 1 September 2020

Page 1 / 3

Dräger helps reduce Firefighter's risk of exposure to carcinogens with new packaged solution

Dräger has launched a range of solutions for cleaning breathing apparatus, respiratory masks and PPE equipment that reduce the risk of carcinogen contamination within emergency teams as part of its Health for the Firefighter campaign.

Dräger have worked in partnership with Harstra instruments, a leading Dutch manufacturer of cleaning and drying equipment. The launch follows a study undertaken by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) which demonstrated a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) worn and evaluated as fully operational will be contaminated within 25 minutes of use in firefighting situations.

Currently, most masks and SCBA are cleaned by hand, which is a lengthy and inconsistent process. It can also pose potential hazards for personnel. Dräger has therefore developed a package of solutions comprising of cleaning products, logistical support and consultancy services that enable fire services to mitigate firefighters' exposure to carcinogens through every step of attending an incident.

They include: simple-to-use washing machines that clean using high pressure water; drying cabinets in various shapes and sizes to accommodate each fire service's space and equipment; and testing facilities to ensure products are decontaminated before going back into operation.

The final part of the new solution is an improved logistic and workshop capability to quarantine contaminated kit, clean it, and then replenish with sanitised PPE to maintain operational capability. Dräger can design and engineer new infrastructure or work within an existing facility to provide optimum protection and cleaning of equipment.

UK marketing manager for Engineered Solutions at Dräger, Andy Taylor said it is now well known that job-related exposures to carcinogens increases the risk of illnesses such as cancer: "Employers owe their employees a duty of care

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Press Release

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Page 2 / 3

and are therefore looking to provide additional protection during training, post incident and in day-to-day equipment handling operations.

“A new standard operating procedure, which incorporates comprehensive training, must be established by the Fire and Resue Service including comprehensive training for emergency teams on how to decontaminate themselves following an incident in which exposure was likely.

“Standardising processes not only minimise the risk of contamination for workshop personnel, but also reduce the exposure of carcinogenic substances for the wearer. The consistency of cleaning also extends the lifetime of PPE.”

Within Harstra’s product portfolio are a range of washing and drying solutions. These include The Wash4 and Wash6DR models which can accommodate between four and six SCBA respectively, including cylinders and up to 18 breathing masks. The Wash4 model provides the user with a choice of cleaning time’s from 5 minutes wash, 10 minutes or the recommended 22 minutes under pressure. The Wash6DR washes at the same intervals, but without the need for Compressed Air cylinders, instead taking pressure from a high powered air external source.

Essential to the process is the requirement that cleaned equipment is dried correctly in a drying cabinet or drying room to remove moisture. The Dräger portfolio is configurable and allows easy transfer of equipment using compatible baskets in the cleaning and drying cycle, for example the Wash9 facemask washer and the M18/45 cabinets. Once these have been clean and dried they can then be checked and tested, Air Cylinders refilled and the SCBA is ready for operations all using Dräger workshop equipment.

Whatever the risk, Dräger has “Technology for Life” solutions to ensure employers provide the best possible protection and employees return home at the end of each shift as safely as possible.

Dräger. Technology for Life®

Dräger is an international leader in the fields of medical and safety technology. Our products protect, support, and save lives. Founded in 1889, Dräger generated revenues of almost € 2.8 billion in 2019. The Dräger Group is currently present in over 190 countries and has more

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Press Release

No. 85 / 1 September 2020

Page 3 / 3

than 14,500 employees worldwide. Please visit www.draeger.com for more information.

<p>Image 1:</p> 	<p>The Wash6DR pictured has been developed to enable SCBA to be cleaned without a compressed air cylinder attached. Instead it is connected to an external fixed high air pressure device and as a result the SCBA remains under pressure during the cleaning process, preventing moisture from entering the equipment. (©Harstra Instruments BV).</p>
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Footnote: link to the study from UCLAN <http://clock.uclan.ac.uk/21626/1/21626%20s41598-018-20616-6.pdf>

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