Technical Data Bulletin

OH&ESD

#177–Recommended use of the 3M™ Cartridge RBE-57 CBRN against Various Military and Industrial Chemical Agents

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3M's RBE-57-CBRN cartridge has been tested against NIOSH CBRN protocol and found to be effective against a number of different chemical warfare agents and industrial chemicals (see table and footnotes on the following page). The cartridge contains a high efficiency (HE) filter to remove solid and liquid aerosols including biological and radiological particles. It also contains activated and impregnated carbon to absorb or react with gases and liquid vapors.

Loose fitting powered air purifying respirators (PAPR) can only be used when sufficient oxygen is present and when the contaminant and concentration are known and below Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) limits. The maximum use concentration (MUC) in which a loose fitting PAPR can be utilized is the product of the assigned protection factor (APF = 1000) multiplied by the airborne exposure limit (such as TLV®). This number must be lower than the IDLH, otherwise the IDLH becomes the MUC (see far right columns in the table). Because it has a cartridge approval, the RBE-57-CBRN may only be used to escape from environments up to IDLH as long as adequate oxygen is present. In the US, OSHA states in their standard for Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), 29 CFR 1910.120, that Level C personal protective equipment (including air purifying respirators) may only be used in areas where lesser levels of skin and respiratory protection are required. Respirators help reduce exposure to certain airborne contaminants, but do not eliminate exposure of the risk of contracting disease or infection.

The cartridge must be replaced in accordance with an established change schedule or earlier if smell, taste or irritation from contaminants is detected. If a change schedule cannot be developed, atmosphere supplying respirators are required. The actual service life of the cartridge will depend upon the specific type, volatility and concentration of the contaminants; and environmental conditions such as humidity and temperature. Data in the table below may serve as a starting point for determining a change schedule. The minimum test times listed in the table are only the minimum required duration under the test conditions; the cartridge may last longer or shorter.

3M™ Service Life Software may also be helpful in determining a change schedule (please see the 3M OH&ESD web site http://www.mmm.com/OccSafety/). The software includes data for many industrial chemicals, and users may calculate service life for other organic vapors (such as warfare agents) if the chemical properties of these contaminants are known.

As part of the NIOSH CBRN approval, the cartridge is attached to a PAPR with a loose fitting hood and the entire respirator is tested against warfare agent permeation. The assembled system must have a test life of at least 8 hours against 50 mg/m^3 (7.55 ppm) distilled sulfur mustard (HD) vapor or 210 mg/m^3 (36 ppm) Sarin (GB) vapor. It must also have a test life of at least 2 hours against 0.43 ml of HD liquid.

In the U.S., OSHA does not require change schedules for particulate filters. The cartridge must be replaced if it is damaged or the PAPR fails minimum flow of 6 cfm.

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Challenge Agent	Challenge Concentration (ppm)	Testing Relative Humidity (%)	Maximum Allowed Breakthrough (ppm)	Minimum Test Time (min)	TLV®[1] / IDLH[2] (ppm)	Maximum Use Concentration[3] (ppm)
Ammonia (NH_3)[4]	1250	25 / 80	12.5	> 15	25 / 500	500
Cyanogen Chloride (CK)[4]	150	25 / 80	2	> 15	0.3C[5] / ND (118)[6]	118
Cyclohexane (Organic Vapors)[4]	1300	25 / 80	10	> 15	100 / 10,000	10,000
Formaldehyde (CH_2O)[4]	250	25 / 80	1.0	> 15	0.3C[5] / 30	30
Hydrogen Cyanide (AC)[4]	470	25 / 80	4.7[7]	> 15	4.7C[5] / 50.0	50.0
Hydrogen Sulfide[4]	500	25 / 80	5.0	> 15	10 / 300	300
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)[4]	100	25 / 80	1 ppm NO_2 or 25 ppm NO[8]	> 15	3 / 50	50
Particulates (HE)[4]	200 mg total loading w/0.3µm MMAD DOP particles	25 / 80	<0.03%	2,400	10 mg/m³ I[9] / ND 3 mg/m³ R[10] / ND	10,000 mg/m³ 3000 mg/m³
Phosgene (CG)[4]	125	25 / 80	1.25	> 15	0.1 / 2.0	2.0
Phosphine (PH)[4]	150	25 / 80	0.3	> 15	0.3 / 200	200
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)[4]	750	25 / 80	5	> 15	2 / 100	100

NA = Not applicable ND = Not Determined ppm = parts per million mg/m³ = milligrams per cubic meter of air

1. TLV = Threshold Limit Value from the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists. ACGIH Threshold Limit Values for Chemical Substances and Physical Agents & Biological Exposure Indices, 2006.
2. IDLH = Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health limit. NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 90–177, 1990. Although newer IDLH values have been published, OSHA stated in a May 21, 1996 Memorandum that OSHA will use the older IDLH valves while NIOSH conducts further study.
3. Assuming a Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) with a loose fitting hood and OSHA assigned Protection Factor of 1000. These values are 1000 times the TLV or the IDLH limit, whichever is lower.
4. Testing criteria from NIOSH Statement of Standard for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Powered Air-Purifying Respirators (PAPR), October 6, 2006. Flow rate is 170 lpm divided by the number of cartridges (3).
5. C = Ceiling Limit refers to the concentration that should not be exceeded during any part of the working exposure without respiratory protection.
6. There is no actual IDLH value for CK. The NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards lists the value for "Cyanides as (CN)" as 50ppm, so multiply 50ppm by the MW of CK (61.47 g/mole) and divide by the MW of CN (26.02 g/mole).
7. Sum of HCN and C_2N_2.
8. Nitrogen dioxide breakthrough is monitored for both NO_2 and NO. The breakthrough is determined by which quantity, NO_2 or NO, reaches breakthrough first.
9. I = Inhalable particles, insoluble, low toxicity, not otherwise specified. See exposure limits for specific substances.
10. R = Respirable particles, insoluble, low toxicity, not otherwise specified. See exposure limits for specific substances.

For more information, please contact:

3M Occupational Health and Environmental Safety Division (OH&ESD)

In the U.S., contact:

Sales Assistance
1-800-896-4223
Technical Assistance
1-800-243-4630
Fax On Demand
1-800-646-1655
Website
http://www.3M.com/OccSafety
For other 3M products
1-800-3M HELPS

In Canada, contact:
3M Canada Company, OH&ESD
P.O. Box 5757
London, Ontario N6A 4T1
Sales Assistance
1-800-265-1840, ext. 6137
Technical Assistance (Canada only)
1-800-267-4414
Fax On Demand
1-800-646-1655
Website
http://www.3M.com/CA/OccSafety

Technical Assistance In Mexico
01-800-712-0646
5270-2255, 5270-2119 (Mexico City only)
Technical Assistance In Brazil
0800-132333
Fax On Demand O.U.S. Locations
1-651-732-6530

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Occupational Health and Environmental Safety Division
3M Center, Building 235-2E-91
St. Paul, MN 55144-1000