

SCBA Buying Guide: How to Keep Pace with Improvements in Firefighter Safety



Your World is Changing

As heat load, duration, and toxicity of structural fires increase due to modern synthetic construction¹, the way we fight fires today is changing. These factors, combined with a technology revolution in firefighter protection, have forced a new approach to purchasing SCBA.

Since the invention of SCBA, their primary focus and function has been air delivery. New technology capabilities have resulted in improvements, but those improvements have generally been incremental.

Revolution of Life-Changing Technology

When considering the revolutionary effects of technology in every aspect of modern life, the possibilities for transforming firefighting safety are significant. Software, imaging, and communications capabilities are advancing rapidly.

In response to these exciting new safety possibilities, the NFPA has jumped on the opportunity to increase standards by mandating certain electronic components for each firefighter. However, electronic capabilities are often concerning for fire departments because incremental enhancements have been made by adding additional electronic pieces.

Despite best efforts, safety is limited by how many pieces can be stuck onto an SCBA, and how many pieces a department can afford. This not only increases the complexity and cost of maintaining and operating SCBA, but it also continues to expand the gap between NFPA standards and what technology can deliver.

Over time, this gap has long-term implications on SCBA choice: The breathing apparatus purchased today may be used for the next 15 years or more.

It's More Than Air Delivery

Missed opportunities for safety improvements are rooted in the assumption that SCBA are comprised of separate, mechanical components—and that the SCBA is primarily about air. Air-delivery is not the issue because every SCBA meets NFPA standards, and every SCBA delivers air well.

Looking at the SCBA merely as a separate component for air diminishes the potential of revolutionary safety technology. And the gap will only get worse over time because the industry status quo will continue to follow this incremental, reactive approach.

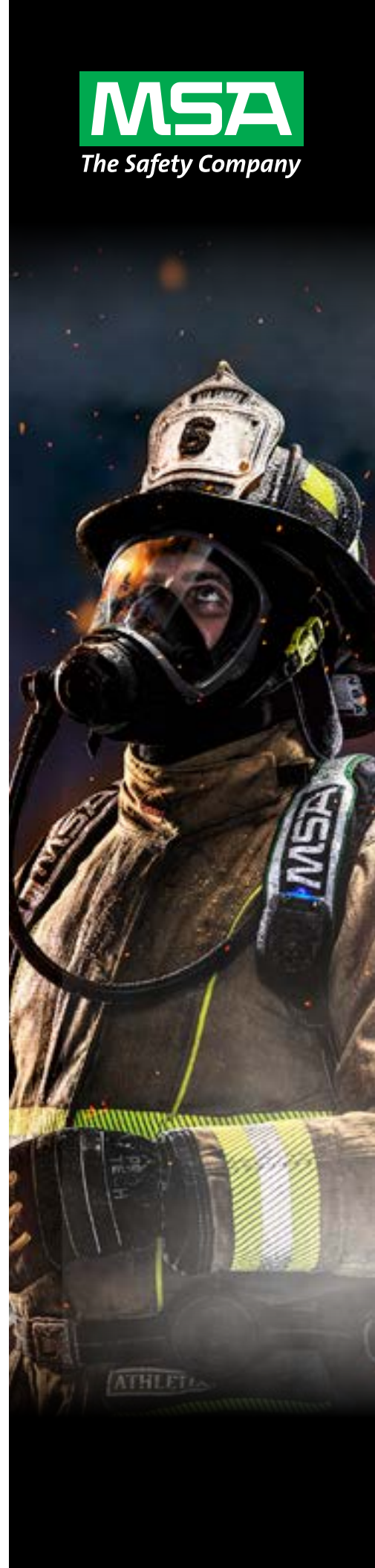
Close the Gap with Safety as a System

The technology revolution has opened the door for life-protection opportunities that are far beyond air delivery and NFPA standards. To keep pace with the rapid improvements in firefighter safety, firefighters need more than the minimum performance from breathing apparatus.

View SCBA as the foundation of a safety technology system that equips firefighters with all the revolutionary safety capabilities that technology offers—now and in the future. Close the gap with technology that goes beyond just breathing air to protect firefighters' senses and bodies as well. Because safety is not just about the pieces; it's about the entire system protecting the firefighter.

¹Source: *Hotter and Faster: How to Fight a Modern Fire*, Patience Haggin, *Time.com*, July 2012.
<http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/07/14/hotter-and-faster-how-to-fight-a-modern-fire/>

WHEN YOU GO IN, WE GO IN WITH YOU.



Key Questions When Looking for an SCBA

Does the SCBA have features that allow you to see, hear, and react quickly to changing situations?

Can SCBA sizing be customized for the best fit for each firefighter?

How many total batteries are needed for the SCBA, and how does that affect long-term costs?

How well does it integrate with other systems, such as communication devices, portable instruments, etc.?

Does the SCBA provide you, your team, and incident command with critical information to make effective life-saving decisions?

Can the SCBA be programmed to meet your standard operating procedures, such as audible and visual alarms at 50% remaining pressure?

Is the facepiece reducing or adding to overall SCBA cost and complexity?

What does the warranty cover and how does that help or hurt ongoing maintenance costs?

How easily can the SCBA be updated to meet changing standards?

How easily can integrated accessories or features, such as thermal imaging, be added as they are developed in the future?



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