

Compressor Service

Breathing air compressors are often the most overlooked and neglected piece of equipment in the fire station. There are regulations in place by the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), the Compressed Gas Association (CGA) and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) that require that breathing air must meet or exceed their standards.

Personnel who do not use their compressors regularly often feel that this means that they don't need to worry as much about servicing their compressor. While lower run hours can certainly extend the years of service on a compressor, lack of use does not mean extended purification filter life. The elements that are used in the air purification process have a specified life cycle for both non-use and strenuous use. This life span can be further shortened by environmental factors or when there are mechanical problems with the compressor. These problems often go undetected if the equipment is not inspected by a trained technician. Just because the unit is building the proper pressure does not mean that the air standards are being met.

Applicable Standards for Compressor Service and Maintenance

From a legal standpoint, the federal regulations that apply to firefighters' respiratory protection are *OSHA 29 CFR parts 1910.134.D (Respiratory Protection)* and *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.169 (Air Receivers)*. *CGA G-7.1-2018 (Commodity Specification for Air)* provides the means to classify grades of air. Each grade corresponds with a typical usage. Most breathing air compressors provide Grade E breathing air based on this classification system. Another source of guidance is *NFPA 1889, Standard on Breathing Air Quality for Emergency Services Respiratory Protection* and *NFPA 1500, Standard on Fire Department Occupational Safety*. NFPA standards are the consensus of members representing government, industry, and respirator manufacturers. They are advisory documents, not legal ones, although some states and jurisdictions have adopted NFPA standards as law. Some lawyers will maintain that they establish common practice and, therefore, carry the weight of law. While NFPA itself is essentially a recommendation, be sure to check with your specific jurisdiction to determine the extent as to what NFPA really means to you.



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for more information**



Basic Inspection, Preventative Maintenance & Air Quality Testing

Basic Inspections are visual and operational inspections that are performed by the end user before and after every compressor use and on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to keep your Compressor in good working order. Staying on top of basic inspections will help ensure proper day-to-day operation of the compressor but should never take the place of Preventative Maintenance performed by a certified Bauer technician. Preventative Maintenance should occur annually and is a service that is available through Alex Air Apparatus. This is a multi-point service package that is completed at your station by a certified Bauer Service Technician and includes full system operational testing, leak checking of the compressor, fill station and air storage system, replacement of purification filters and basic general maintenance of the entire system. In addition to annual Preventative Maintenance, Air Quality Testing is required by both OSHA and NFPA and should occur every 90 days (quarterly), or any time the purification filter has been replaced. It is also important to note that Bauer does reserve the right to deny any warranty claim submitted if annual Preventative Maintenance has not taken place, so it is highly recommended to adhere to this service and testing schedule.

Record Keeping

It is very important to keep accurate records of compressor history. NFPA states that “The organization shall maintain records of at least installation, maintenance, purification component changes, operation, trouble reports and corrective actions taken”. Alex Air Apparatus will keep and maintain accurate records, related to compressor service and maintenance, and will provide them to you. These records will be stored near your compressor and are to be kept for a minimum of 5 years.



Conclusion

Having a compressor that functions properly is critical to firefighter safety. We offer these services to ensure that your compressor will operate properly when you need it to. Alex Air Apparatus is an authorized Bauer distributor, but we will provide service to most breathing air compressors. Talk to your Alex Air Sales or Service Representative today and ask about our various Service Plans and our budget conscious payment options!



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