

# SCBA Testing

How frequently should you test your SCBA? Are there any OSHA or NFPA standards that you need to follow? What about NFPA standards? What is the difference between inspections, preventative maintenance and flow testing? What service plan is right for my department? These are just a few of the common questions that we hear frequently and will try to answer.

## Ensuring NFPA Compliance

To be considered NFPA compliant, there are three criteria that must be met. First, the SCBA must meet the Flow Testing frequency requirements. Secondly, the SCBA must be tested on a calibrated breathing machine that meets the NFPA 1852 specifications. Finally, you must always test SCBAs with the SCBA manufacturer's software. Some of the acceptance criteria lists a performance level, then follow with the statement "or shall meet the manufacturer's specifications, whichever is more stringent." Customers need to provide documentation confirming that their SCBA have met or exceeded the NFPA and manufacturer test criteria. All SCBAs, old and new, regardless of brand, need Preventative Maintenance and NFPA compliant Flow Testing.

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for more information**



## Applicable Standards for SCBA Service and Maintenance

From a legal standpoint, the federal regulations that apply to firefighters' respiratory protection are 29 CFR parts 1910.134 and 1910.156. Another source of guidance is NFPA 1852, Standard on the Selection, Care, and Maintenance of Open-Circuit Breathing Apparatus.



## Basic Inspection, Preventative Maintenance & Flow Testing

Basic Inspections are visual and operational inspections that are performed by the end user before and after every SCBA use and on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to keep your SCBA in good working order. 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 Dräger Service Technician and includes replacement of all batteries, function testing the entire SCBA and general cleaning and disinfecting of the SCBA and mask. In addition to annual Preventative Maintenance, Flow Testing is required by both Dräger and NFPA, and should occur annually or any time the SCBA has been repaired or rebuilt. Flow Testing can reveal problems long before a Basic Inspection ever will. Alex Air Apparatus can provide Flow Testing at your station, so your SCBA will not be taken out of service for an extended time. It is also important to note that Dräger does reserve the right to deny any warranty claim submitted if annual Preventative Maintenance and Flow Testing has not taken place, so it is highly recommended to adhere to this service and testing schedule.



## Fit Testing

Alex Air Apparatus also provides Quantitative Fit Testing. OSHA 1910.134 states that the administering entity is responsible for ensuring those who wear SCBA are annually fit tested for proper facepiece seal. NFPA 1500 requires that, before an employee may be required to use any respirator with a negative or positive pressure tight-fitting facepiece, the employee must be fit tested with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator that will be used. Fit Testing should be conducted annually.



## Conclusion

Having an SCBA that functions and fits properly is critical to firefighter safety. We offer these services to ensure that your SCBA will operate at peak performance every time it is called into service. We also understand that budgets are very tight, and that it can be difficult to appropriate funding for these services. We have options! Talk to your Alex Air Sales or Service Representative today and ask about our various Service Plans.

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