



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



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Information Bulletin No. **CA-2009-019**

To: All District Managers, All Field Managers
Attention: District and Field Office FMO's

From: Deputy State Director, Support Services

Subject: California BLM Policy for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Units
DD: 6/15/2009

Program Area: Fire Management

Purpose: This Information Bulletin (IB) reiterates the existing policy for Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) use as originally directed in *Instruction Memorandum No. CA-2008-017*.

Policy/Action: In order to comply with the statewide policy for the use of SCBA's, a memo from the District/Field Manager is required to be sent annually to the State Director (attention to the State Fire Management Officer). This memo will confirm compliance with all the implementation procedures of the SCBA program. Documentation needs to be completed by all offices for the 2009 fire season by June 15, 2009. This is a statewide program policy, therefore; each Field Office must be compliant before SCBA's are placed on engines within that office.

Timeframe: Effective immediately

Budget Impact: None

Background: Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units are used in some California wildland fire organizations. Their use provides additional protection to firefighters responding to fires threatening public lands that may have originated from vehicle fires, dump fires or structure fires. Increased occurrence of these types of fires has elevated the potential exposure to toxic smoke and gases at wildland fire incidents. It is BLM California's policy that personnel not be exposed to a hazardous atmosphere without the available benefit of SCBA's.

Standards for SCBA use are found in the updated (2008) BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide. A BLM California SCBA Training Course Guide has also been developed. Both guides are on CD-ROM and have been distributed to all Field Office's for the

2009 fire season. District/Regions must meet the standards for medical requirements, equipment, training and clothing as established in the BLM California SCBA Standard Operating Procedures Guide.

The California BLM Fire Management Program has taken steps to provide protection to the firefighter by purchasing new positive pressure SCBA units for all Type 3 engines (class 665) within California. These SCBA units are the only approved units, and are required to be installed on all Type 3 engines.

The BLM emphasis in using SCBA units on structure fires will continue to be to preserve life and protect property. Our policy of NOT entering structures for suppression efforts will remain the same. We will continue to provide structure protection from the exterior only.

Use of SCBA units on vehicle fires will be according to the guide. The SCBA units must be worn throughout the extinguishment and mop-up phases of this type of incident. To offer maximum safety to the firefighter during these types of fires, foam will be utilized at all times during extinguishment and mop-up. All engineering and management controls should be exercised prior to the use of SCBA's.

Our objective for installing the SCBA's is not to provide a new way for our firefighters to fight fires, but provide protection from what they are already exposed to.

If you have any questions or need additional copies of the guide and training manual, please contact Ken Hood, State Aviation and Equipment Manager, at (916) 978-4435.

Signed by:
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DSD, Support Services

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Records Management