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Subject: Use of After Market Component Parts

RESPIRATOR USER NOTICE

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires the use of respirators approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for occupational inhalation exposures when engineering or administrative controls are not adequate to reduce the hazards to an acceptable level. The use of a non NIOSH-approved respirator places the employer at risk of citation and fines by OSHA.

NIOSH issues certificates of approval for specific and complete respirator assemblies. The approval is granted after the respirator has been evaluated and found to be in compliance with all of the requirements of the NIOSH regulations in Title 42, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Part 84. The requirements include the presence of a viable quality assurance program that controls the important aspects of the components and their assemblies into a configuration assuring produced units continue to meet the requirements.

NIOSH has become aware of a dangerous practice where respirator users are swapping the original hose provided with supplied-air respirators with different sized hoses. The danger with using non-original equipment manufacturer (OEM) hoses that are sized differently can result in too little breathing air being delivered to the facepiece as well as too much air being delivered. In addition, because these hoses have not been subjected to the rigors of the NIOSH-approved quality assurance program of the OEM, they may have other performance features that are not compatible to the proper performance of the respirator.

Although respirators are comprised of various component parts, they are approved as a single unit. Replacing NIOSH-approved respirator parts, components, and accessories with non NIOSH-approved parts manufactured by another company voids the NIOSH approval. The level of performance that was required and demonstrated to obtain the NIOSH-approval label can no longer be expected. Therefore, the modified configuration puts the user at risk. Using a modified configuration may also void the manufacturer's product warranty.

If you have any questions about the device you are using, you may contact NIOSH at npptl@cdc.gov or by calling 412 386-4000.