

17 July 2012

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT (MOA)  
On  
Technical Order 42B-1-22, Change 1 (8 May 2012)  
Quality Control of Compressed and Liquid Breathing Air

1. American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Council 214 and Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC), hereafter referred to as the Union and Management, enter into this MOA regarding subject change as it applies to bargaining unit employees in matters covered by the Master Labor Agreement (MLA) between the parties.
2. Under this change, the Air Force Petroleum Agency (AFPA) has modified the standards for Source 1 Compressed Breathing Air, as supplied in tanks used by fire fighters. The new standards modify the allowance for carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and water vapor. The Union consulted with Command officials to evaluate the revised standards and the scientific justification for judging them safe. The following is a summary:
  - a. The 2004 edition of T.O. 42B-1-22 mandated a 10 ppm limit for carbon monoxide in compressed breathing air. In 2009, carbon monoxide allowances were decreased from 10 to 5 ppm to match the new 2008 NFPA standard, as the Air Force did not write a deviation or Technical Implementation Guide (TIG) to implement the NFPA standard. The change was due to industry involvement in the formulation of the revised NFPA standard, and was not based on scientific study or previous limits established by OSHA, NIOSH, or AFPA. The breathing air compressors in stock, however, were not converted to sound the carbon monoxide alarm at 5 ppm and they remain calibrated to 10 ppm. According to AFPA, there have been no reports of adverse reactions under the 2004 T.O., so the 10 ppm standard was restored in the 2012 revision of T.O. 42B-22-1. The current OSHA permissible exposure limit (PEL) for carbon monoxide is 50 ppm.
  - b. VOCs were not measured in 2004. Instead the 2004 tech order measured "gaseous hydrocarbons," with a 25 ppm standard. Gaseous hydrocarbons were replaced by VOCs in 2009, with a standard set at 25 ppm. In 2012 gaseous hydrocarbons got replaced by VOCs again, with the same standard of 25 ppm. The change is in method of measurement, not the standard.
  - c. The water vapor standard increased from 24 ppm to 67 ppm. This amounts to less than very low humidity and poses no danger.
3. The Parties agree that affected fire fighters should understand why these changes will not adversely affect their health and safety. Management will post a copy of this MOA to inform each affected employee. Employee concerns will be addressed by management.

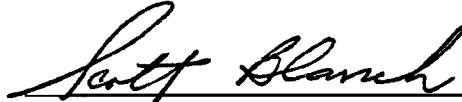
4. All remedies available under the MLA or 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71 are available to the parties if either party believes the other has failed to comply with any of the requirements of this MOA.

FOR MANAGEMENT



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FOR THE UNION



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