



## MSA's Next-Generation Breathing Apparatus for Firefighters First to Receive Full NFPA Approval

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Air Mask and Integrated PASS Device Provide New Levels of Protection

PITTSBURGH, Sept. 11 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- MSA (NYSE: MSA), the world's leading developer of sophisticated safety equipment, today announced that its FireHawk M7 self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) has been certified as meeting new rigorous performance requirements adopted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). The FireHawk M7 Air Mask is the first device of its kind to receive NFPA approval on both its breathing apparatus and Personal Alert Safety System (PASS), which is an SCBA component that sounds a loud, piercing alarm whenever a firefighter becomes disabled or lies motionless for 30 seconds.

(Photo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20070911/NETU086> )

To receive certification for NFPA 1981: 2007 edition, which applies to the breathing apparatus, and NFPA 1982: 2007 edition, which applies to PASS devices, units must undergo a battery of tests widely considered to be the most demanding in NFPA history. Most notable among these tests is a high-temperature functionality test, which requires PASS devices to emit a 95- decibel alarm at temperatures up to 500 degrees Fahrenheit.

The PASS Alarm on the FireHawk M7 Air Mask, which is the only PASS Alarm currently approved by the NFPA, was developed by MSA with input from third- party acoustic experts and utilizes patent-pending technology to meet NFPA requirements.

"We estimate that 95 percent of all Air Masks sold in the United States are equipped with an integrated PASS device," said Ron Herring, MSA Vice President of Global Product Leadership. "Given the fact that improved PASS performance and the resulting higher level of firefighter protection was the driving force behind the new NFPA standards, we are especially proud to be the first SCBA manufacturer to achieve this level of certification."

In addition to more stringent performance requirements for PASS devices, the new NFPA standards establish higher benchmarks for electronics durability, which is more important than ever given the level of advanced technology found in today's units.

Mr. Herring noted that the FireHawk M7 Air Mask was designed based on substantial customer feedback and field focus group studies. Overall, MSA gathered input and conducted interviews from hundreds of active firefighters, representing a strong "voice of the customer" influence into the MSA design. "Firefighters have been waiting for this day for some time," Mr. Herring said. "They have, in a manner of speaking, voiced their own approval of our new Air Mask design. Firefighters are excited about the new safety features available in the FireHawk M7 model, and we're certainly excited to be able to provide them."

With a finalized design that fully meets the NFPA standards, and with the NFPA certification process now complete, Mr. Herring said the company now has the green light to ramp-up related manufacturing processes and supply-chain logistics. He added the company will also begin assisting fire departments with field evaluations of the new apparatus. "Now that the designs and materials are locked-in, we can focus our operations team on achieving a smooth and rapid transition from testing and certification to serial production, while our sales team can concentrate on what they do best - demonstrating the remarkable advancements of this great new SCBA system," Mr. Herring said.

Established in 1914, MSA is a global leader in the development, manufacture and supply of sophisticated safety products that protect people's health and safety. Sophisticated safety products typically integrate any combination of electronics, mechanical systems and advanced materials to protect users against hazardous or life-threatening situations. The company's comprehensive line of products is used by workers around the world in the fire service, homeland security, construction and other industries, as well as the military. Principal products include self-contained breathing apparatus, gas masks, gas detection instruments, head protection, respirators, ballistic body armor and thermal imaging cameras. The company also provides a broad range of consumer and contractor safety products through retail channels. These products are marketed and sold under the MSA Safety Works brand. MSA has annual sales of approximately \$914 million, manufacturing operations throughout the United States and Europe, and more than 40 international locations. Additional information is available on the company's Web site at [www.msanet.com](http://www.msanet.com).

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NOTE TO LOCAL EDITORS: To arrange a demonstration of MSA's new NFPA- compliant Air Mask and PASS system, please contact Mark Deasy or Samantha D'Uva at 412-967-3357. CONTACT:

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