



Mine Safety Appliances Company • P.O. Box 426 • Pittsburgh, PA 15230

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## **Safety Notice**

### Lightweight SCBA Cylinders can become Airborne

February 17, 2004

**To: All persons who use or handle SCBA cylinders**

MSA has received several reports of incidents involving composite cylinders where the cylinder has become airborne solely under the thrust of air from an inadvertently opened cylinder valve. If a cylinder is carried by the handwheel, the thrust from even a partially opened cylinder valve can cause a lightweight cylinder to break away from one's grasp. The cylinder can then become an airborne projectile, flying or moving uncontrollably until the pressure dissipates. This condition can result in injury or property damage.

In the reported incidents, the cylinder was either being carried or moved by the handwheel or was dropped on the handwheel. If a cylinder is removed from a horizontal shelf by grasping the handwheel, the weight of the cylinder can cause the cylinder to rotate downward causing the valve to open slightly.

This condition is not unique to MSA cylinders. All SCBA users can benefit from the technology available in lightweight composite cylinders, as manufacturers attempt to make SCBA as light as possible. However, along with this benefit, SCBA users and those persons who handle SCBA cylinders must take the necessary precautions to avoid cylinder accidents. Although these reports involved composite cylinders, MSA recommends that all SCBA cylinders be handled with care. The following guidelines are provided:

- **NEVER carry a cylinder by the handwheel.**
- **ALWAYS handle a cylinder by grasping or cradling the cylinder body.**
- **AVOID dropping a cylinder or bumping the handwheel.**
- **Grasp the handwheel ONLY to open or close the valve.**

If you have any questions regarding this notice, please contact MSA Customer Service at 1-877-MSA-3473.

Very truly yours,



Charles J. Seibel, Jr.  
Manager of Product Safety

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LOCATION: RIDC Industrial Park • 121 Gamma Drive • Pittsburgh, PA 15238