

# QA

## Common Questions about MSA's Ultra Elite® CBRN Gas Mask

**Q: If my department is already using the MSA Air Mask with Ultra Elite Facepiece, are we required to fit test on the Ultra Elite Gas Mask?**

A: The MSA Ultra Elite facepiece used on an SCBA and the Ultra Elite CBRN Gas Mask are made from the same mold. The sealing surfaces are identical. As long as you pass a fit test for one mask, you are covered for the other. This eliminates the need for multiple fit testing that would be required if the facepieces were not designed from a common platform.

**Q: Why should a fire department have dedicated facepieces for SCBA and CBRN Gas Masks?**

A: The harsh environment of routine firefighting may degrade an SCBA facepiece. Although this normal wear from daily use will not affect the protection afforded by a positive-pressure SCBA, it may not be suitable in a chemical warfare environment when converted to a negative-pressure Gas Mask. Gas Mask facepieces of this type do not have positive pressure to protect the face seal from the entry of external contaminants. Therefore, they are highly dependent on the integrity of the facepiece components. This is evidenced by the NIOSH CBRN fit requirements for Gas Mask facepieces which are set at 2000, as compared to the much lower fit requirement of 500 for SCBA. For this reason, operating procedures that prevent the interchanging of SCBA and Gas Mask facepieces should be developed.

**Q: What is the service life of a facepiece?**

A: A facepiece can have an indefinite service life, provided it passes the inspection requirements outlined in the instruction manual. There are many variables that can affect the service life of a facepiece. The amount of use is the most important factor. A good routine maintenance program and proper storage procedures will extend the life of the facepiece. It is not uncommon for facepieces to provide service for more than 15 years.



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**Q: What is the service time of the CBRN Canister?**

A: That is directly dependent on many variables. Some of these include the type of contaminant, concentration of that contaminant and the breathing rate of the individual wearing the respirator. In order to determine the service life of the canister, you can use MSA's Cartridge Calculator. This web application can be found at <http://www.msanet.com/calculator>. By simply answering the questions, the Calculator will determine the maximum amount of time a canister should be used in those conditions.

**Q: What is the shelf-life of the canister?**

A: An unopened CBRN Canister has a shelf-life of five years from the date of manufacture. Due to the potential exposure to life threatening contaminants, MSA's policy is to discard the canister after five years of storage. It is important to keep the canister in the hermetically sealed package to keep the sorbent materials fresh until it is necessary for use.

**Q: Can the facepiece be decontaminated after use and exposure to CBRN agents?**

A: First, do not remove the facepiece until the respirator and your protective clothing are decontaminated; otherwise, exposure to contaminants may result. You should follow the decontamination and disposal procedures established by the appropriate authorities that are managing the incident.

**Q: What type of protection does the Ultra Elite Gas Mask provide?**

A: The Ultra Elite Gas Mask provides respiratory protection. It prevents contaminants from entering the respiratory tract. However, the respirator assembly does not provide dermal (skin) protection.

**Note:** This Bulletin contains only a general description of the products shown. While uses and performance capabilities are described, under no circumstances shall the products be used by untrained or unqualified individuals and not until the product instructions including any warnings or cautions provided have been thoroughly read and understood. Only they contain the complete and detailed information concerning proper use and care of these products.



ID 0517-11-MC / Oct 2004  
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