

On the Status of PAPR in Japan

Hiroshi Yamada

Shigematsu Works Co., Ltd, Tokyo, Japan

Although PAPRs have been used in very specific industries, such as the nuclear power industry, the name "PAPR" was not popular in general industries in Japan.

In recent years, since the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) had a big interest in PAPR for solving occupational health issues, the social concern about PAPRs has increased in Japan. Now two kinds of respirators, namely, "Dust respirators" and "Gas respirators", are certified by the MHLW under the Industrial Safety and Health Act. Toward the certification of PAPR the MHLW held some committees which included civilian members, and now the bill is introduced to Parliament. PAPR will also be the target of certification in the near future.

Around the time MHLW was working toward the certification of PAPRs, JIS T 8157 (Powered air purifying respirators) was revised by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in 2009. Revision of JIS seems to precede certification by the MHLW.

In order that PAPR will be truly popular, the users should understand the superior aspects of it. Generally, the information about product performance data and directions for use from a manufacturer play an important role. Furthermore, if the information on the performance of PAPR is given while wearing it, the wearer will have more secure understanding. For this purpose, equipment was developed in which the pressure in a facepiece and the leakage rate of PAPR with a facepiece can be measured simultaneously.

Although only the type of PAPR for particulate matters is specified in JIS T 8157:2009, the draft preparation has been worked for adding the type of PAPR for gaseous substances to the relevant JIS by the Japanese Respirator Manufacturers Association (JRMA).

We will discuss the details of the information to provide users with better understanding of PAPRs.