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AIHA's Respiratory Protection Committee Releases White Paper on Research Needs in Respiratory Protection

FAIRFAX, VA (November 20, 2009) — Many current practices in respiratory protection are based on assumptions, past practices, or extrapolation from laboratory studies. Few studies have been done to evaluate the efficacy of or the need for each of these practices. The American Industrial Hygiene Association® (AIHA®) believes the results of research on the practical, applied topics presented in their newly released white paper may significantly enhance the safe and effective use of respiratory protection.

In recent years, the field of respiratory protection has experienced unprecedented, substantial opportunities and challenges. The establishment of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) provides a focal point for research and standard setting for new classes of respiratory protective devices. The increased demand for protection from chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) hazards; outbreaks of life threatening viruses; and new technologies for more precise characterization of aerosol particle sizes, respiratory hazards, and respirator performance are generating increased interest in this subject area. The AIHA Respiratory Protection Committee determined this is an opportune time to consider respiratory protection research topics and priorities.

Having a very diverse membership, the committee established a project team consisting of users, government officials, manufacturers, researchers, standards developers, and other interested industrial hygienists. The project group identified seven high priority research topics including:

- (1) Measurement of respirator performance
- (2) Qualitative fit testing for full facepiece respirators
- (3) Appropriateness of fit factor safety margin criterion
- (4) In-facepiece measurements
- (5) Effectiveness of respiratory protection program requirements
- (6) Effectiveness of user seal checks
- (7) Organic vapor cartridge desorption

These topics are presented to influence NIOSH, universities, and independent researchers to further investigate the benefits and to improve available respiratory protection. You can view the AIHA [white paper](#) in its entirety. For further information, contact AIHA's Respiratory Protection Committee Chair, Jay A. Parker, CIH, at (412) 386-5227 or jparker3@cdc.gov or Aaron Trippler, AIHA Director of Government Affairs, at (703) 846-0730 or atrippler@aiha.org.

Founded in 1939, the **American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)** is the premier association of occupational and environmental health and safety professionals. AIHA's 10,460 members play a crucial role on the front line of worker health and safety every day. Members represent a cross-section of industry, private business, labor, government, and academia. For more information, go to www.aiha.org.