



November 21, 2016

Dear Valued Customer,

3M has received a number of recent inquiries asking for clarification regarding the user advisory notice dated September 30, 2016 for the 3M™ Breathe Easy™ BE-10BR butyl rubber hood, particularly regarding the establishment of a recommended 10-year shelf life, and the ability to use the product beyond the recommended 10-year shelf life claim. This letter is meant to clarify these issues.

Prior to the September 30, 2016 notice, the BE-10BR hood did not have a published recommended shelf life. The recommended 10-year period was deemed necessary only recently after 3M inspected and tested a number of BE-10BR hoods of various manufacture dates that have been in service for different time periods. A number of hoods that had been in use for over 10 years had experienced deterioration of various components.

The 10-year shelf life claim does not mean that all hoods will automatically expire or cease to function beyond 10 years – but, instead, that some hoods “...may not work as expected,” as stated in the September 30 notice. Some hoods may continue to provide the claimed CBRN and respiratory protection beyond the 10-year period, while some may not. Users should be reassured that a BE-10BR hood greater than 10 years old that both has a new exhalation valve and that has no degraded components should continue to meet the claimed CBRN and respiratory protection requirements. Still, **because there is a greater chance of a hood over 10 years experiencing deterioration of various components, 3M strongly recommends any customers choosing to use their butyl rubbers hoods beyond 10 years after date of manufacture replace them as soon as possible.**

Per the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard 29 CFR 1910.134, the BE-10BR hood should undergo inspection and performance checks of the entire respirator system before and after each use, as well as a monthly inspection when the respirator is intended for emergency use.

Customers who decide to continue using the hoods older than 10 years must ensure the hoods are fully intact and operational to ensure confidence with



product performance. 3M recommends the following to customers who choose to use product past the 10-year recommended shelf life.

1. Ensure that the product is being stored in accordance with the conditions specified in the user instructions.
2. Replace the over-pressure valve and valve holder assembly in the hood. Call 1-855-317-4203 and request a complimentary replacement valve and valve seat.
3. Inspect with care the condition of the hood and all components for signs of degradation, such as:
 - Fabric: Examine the condition of the outer butyl rubber fabric, outer and inner shroud and facesal. Check that there are no cracks, rips, holes, tears or other damage.
 - Facesal elastic: Examine the condition of the facesal. Check that there is no peeling or breaking down of the elastic. Stretch several 2-3 inch sections of the facesal and verify that it recovers to its original length.
 - Nape seal elastic: Examine the condition of the nape seal (seal at the back of the neck, near the base of the skull). Check that there are no holes, tears or other damage. Stretch several 2-3 inch sections of the nape seal elastic and verify that it recovers to its original length.
 - Suspension: Examine the head suspension for cracks, tears or other damage. Stretch several 2-3 inch sections of the suspension elastic and verify that it recovers to its original length.
 - Breathing tube connection: Examine the exterior and interior of the breathing tube connection point (near the nape seal). Check that there are no cracks, rips, dents holes, tears or other damage. Gently attempt to rotate the circular breathing tube connection interface and verify it does not move freely.
 - Visor: Look for creases, scratches, or other visual distortions that make it difficult to see through the visor. Examine the visor for cracks or holes that may permit contaminated air (or liquid splash) to enter the hood.
 - Seams: examine the luting on the seams to ensure that it is not peeling, cracked, flaking or otherwise damaged. Inspect closely to verify that the seam, including threads, are covered. Note: luting refers to the material used to seal the BE-10BR seams.



- Valve: Verify the valve holder is tight in the visor by turning the retaining ring on the back of the valve assembly.
 - **Remove any hoods from service that exhibit any of these signs of degradation. Contact 3M Technical Service at 1-800-243-4630 if you have any questions regarding inspection.**
4. Establish a mechanism for tracking the age of hoods in your stockpile to help ensure your inventory remains within the 3M recommended 10-year time period.

As this system is important for emergency preparedness, we also ask that inspection procedures specified in this letter and all *User Instructions* be reviewed to re-familiarize supervisors and users with important instructions, warnings, limitations, and other information important for use of the system.

We hope that this letter clarifies some of the points in the September 30 notice. Should you have any further questions, please contact your local Sales Representative or 3M Personal Safety Division Technical Service at 1-800-243-4630. To request your complimentary valve and valve seat replacement please call 1-855-317-4203.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Sneden".

Chris Sneden
3M Personal Safety Division
US Marketing Manager

