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## Report of the Week

**I'm losing air, but don't know why.**  
**10/07/2010**

**Report Number:** 10-0000309

Report Date: 02/24/2010 11:59

### Synopsis

SCBA storage leads to failure.

### Demographics

Department type: Combination, Mostly paid

Job or rank: Captain

Department shift: 24 hours on - 48 hours off

Age: 25 - 33

Years of fire service experience: 4 - 6

Region: FEMA Region IV

Service Area: Suburban

### Event Information

Event type: Fire emergency event: structure fire, vehicle fire, wildland fire, etc.

Event date and time: 02/19/2010 00:00

Hours into the shift: 13 - 16

Event participation: Told to and submitted by safety officer

Weather at time of event: Cloudy and Dry

Do you think this will happen again? Yes

What were the contributing factors?

- Procedure
- Equipment

What do you believe is the loss potential?

- Lost time injury
- Property damage
- Life threatening injury

### Event Description

The following is a mishap that I recently had with an SCBA on a structure fire and the events leading up to it. It is common practice to place the shoulder straps of an SCBA over the back padding of the seat when stowing it. It makes it easier to put on and it is ready for quick donning while responding to a call.

While out doing hydrants I exited the truck to check a hydrant and when I reentered the truck, I noticed my seatbelt was stuck in the door and the door ajar light was going off. It was my door that was tripping the light due to my seatbelt being stuck in the door. I simply opened the door and pushed away the seatbelt and what appeared to be part of the SCBA strap. I put my seatbelt on and away we went down the road to service the next hydrant.

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Later that date, we responded to a structure fire. I put my SCBA on while enroute as usual. We pulled up with a moderate amount of smoke showing from the residence. Upon making entry into the residence, I turned my SCBA on and proceeded to click the regulator into my face piece. I got several feet into the smoke filled residence and I noticed that I was having a hard time breathing air from the regulator. I immediately exited the structure due to an SCBA malfunction. When I took off the malfunctioning SCBA I noticed a fair amount of air leaking from around the buddy breather.

After the fire I placed another SCBA in my seat that was ready for use. I placed the shoulder straps over the back padding as usual. When I did so, I noticed that the buddy breather was sitting between the door panel and the grab handle we have on the engine to assist with entering the cab. It dawned on me that I must have shut part of the buddy breather in the door when we were doing hydrants and it was not just the strap that was keeping the door from shutting all the way.

During truck checks this date, the SCBA operated properly. This is something that can happen after truck checks. It can happen by getting in and out of the truck during daily operations. From now on, I am going to start leaving the strap that is closest to the door off the back rest. It may take some of the simplicity out of donning the SCBA while responding to a call, but on this day it cost me an ample amount of the precious time that we have on structure fires to come out and change to another SCBA. It is something that is easily overlooked; however, it is something that can be easily fixed. This day it only cost me time. It could have caused serious injury. Something as simple as placing the shoulder strap in a different position will keep it from costing me again.

[Reviewer's Note: See the Resources Page, Videos and Photos Section, for photos related to this near miss]

### **Lessons Learned**

Make sure that part of the SCBA is not near the door closure area during all phases of truck movement. Check thoroughly, visually and by feeling along the hoses with hands during truck checks. Consider enclosing SCBA straps inside the quick release buckle if equipped; or other restraint system for SCBA on seat back.

### **Report of the Week**

This week's ROTW, [10-309](#), starts as many near misses do. A firefighter performs a seemingly harmless action to ensure operational readiness. This action has been used countless times before, and had served this firefighter well. However, a chain of events with a simple lesson precedes the situation that puts the firefighter at great risk.

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[Reviewer's Note: See the Resources Page, Videos and Photos Section, for photos related to this near miss][Report 10-309/Resources/Photos](#)

Equipment preparation is part of every dedicated firefighter’s daily routine. Once an apparatus assignment is given, placing our PPE on the apparatus, arranging equipment for easy access (e.g., medical gloves) and arranging SCBA straps are common practices. Interior cab configurations vary significantly by age, manufacturer, cab style, etc. Report [10-309](#) illustrates another occurrence that probably happens more often than anyone would expect or even think about reporting. The value of this report lies in its illustration of how attentive we should be to all operational readiness practices involving flexible components. Once you have read the entire account of [10-309](#), reviewed the photos posted on the Resources Page, and reviewed the related reports below, address the following:

1. Have you ever experienced an incident where you caught a piece of equipment in an apparatus door?
2. If yes, what was the piece of equipment, why did it get caught in the door, and was there any damage to the door?
3. Applying your department’s SOPs to this event, would this qualify as a Mayday when the air leak started or at a point before?
4. What recommendations would you make to prevent a reoccurrence of the SCBA strap and buddy breather getting caught in the door?
5. Where is the best place to find an additional SCBA should you need an emergency replacement on the fireground?

**Related Reports – Topical Relation: (SCBA Malfunction, Operator Contributed)**

[05-178](#)

[06-166](#)

[07-810](#)

[08-258](#)

[09-331](#)

Submit your report to [www.firefighternearmiss.com](http://www.firefighternearmiss.com) today so everyone goes home tomorrow.

Note: The questions posed by the reviewers are designed to generate discussion and thought in the name of promoting firefighter safety. They are not intended to pass judgment on the actions and performance of individuals in the reports.

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