
~ President's Foreword ~

Improving Respiratory Protection Through International Partnerships by Increasing Knowledge, Enhancing Education and Developing Technologies

Richard W. Metzler, †

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory
Post Office Box 18070 ~ 626 Cochran Mill Road
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15236, RMetzler@cdc.gov

† *Richard Metzler is Acting Director of the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory (NPPTL) at NIOSH/CDC and is the current President of the International Society for Respiratory Protection (ISRP).*

Every generation is presented with national or international challenges of monumental importance to society such as the events of war, social revolution, economic turmoil, civil rights upheaval and technological change, to name but a few. Events of such magnitude and the ways in which they are addressed change the world and present major social and professional challenges. For example, at the turn of the 20th century and well into 21st century, thousands of mine workers tragically perished in mine explosions or acquired debilitating illnesses like pneumoconiosis and silicosis. Occupational safety and health professionals confronted these tragedies by acquiring new knowledge in order that they might develop innovative "interventional" technologies and educational modules, mainly through collaboration in quality partnerships.

Today, we are challenged by international terrorism, not only threatening the safety, health and security of every world citizen, but also presenting extraordinary hazards for emergency responders. In 2001, the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States brought an urgency to addressing diverse respiratory protection needs including: the *self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)* respirators — effective against *chemical warfare agents (CWAs)*; the air-purifying respirator (APR) — protecting against CWAs, numerous toxic industrial chemicals and biological agents; and the escape respirator — providing protective capacity to escape the immediate scene of the an emergent event or crisis.

The membership of the International Society for Respiratory Protection (ISRP) is uniquely positioned to substantially contribute toward meeting the various respiratory protection needs of a world confronted by global terrorism. We began our initial contribution toward this end by dedicating our Society's 9th international conference (Pittsburgh, 1999) to salient issues of respiratory protection associated with the threats of terrorism. We continued to focus our attention on emerging issues of respiratory protection broadly related to terrorism by bringing global experts together at our 10th international conference (Sydney, 2000) and we look forward to the occasion of our 11th international conference (Edinburgh 2002) to further advance knowledge about hazards, protection needs, equipment requirements, standards and related technologies. Our members make contributions in their respective countries to expand knowledge, improve education and develop technology, fostered through our unique international partnerships. For example, in the United States, NIOSH has implemented new standards for CBRN SCBA and issued approval of this equipment for the protection of emergency responders.

In order to provide the ISRP membership, academia, government and private sector interests with a ready source of current and relevant information regarding respiratory protection and related subjects (e.g., research data, editorial analysis, standards development, etc.), the Directors of the Society have initiated important changes related to the improved rhythm of publishing our *Journal (JISRP)* and the continued development and

revision of our home page at our exciting new international web site — <http://www.isrp.com.au>

On behalf of the Society, I invite our membership, our collaborators, our contributors, our readers, our international constituency and our technical consumers to read the *Journal* and visit our website with frequency. If you have data and interpretations to report, relevant questions to raise or editorial commentary to make, your submissions are always welcome for editorial consideration. Through these two media (the *Journal* and our website), international conferences and various *ad hoc* fora, the ISRP is committed to improving respiratory protection through international partnerships by increasing knowledge, enhancing education and developing technologies.