

What happened?

While carrying out work in an enclosed space, the supply of breathing air became blocked. The staff then immediately went to the exit and took their masks off. The concentration of hazardous substances was such (below the threshold value) that it was possible to take the mask off.



Consequence

Thanks to their proper training and courses, the employees were able to remain calm so that they could leave the workplace safely. Furthermore, everything had been discussed well before the job and the staff were aware of the concentrations of hazardous substances in the enclosed space.

Cause

The investigation showed:

- moisture problems had arisen in the breathing air line system during the work;
- the filter at the breathing air compressor (the 'filling station') that filters moisture and oil out of the air had not been replaced in good time, resulting in moisture accumulating in the breathing air cylinders when they were filled;
- the moisture froze when the reducer valve was working at a high load, which blocked the supply of breathing air;
- the prescribed maximum length for the breathing air hose had been exceeded for 2 employees, resulting in the reducer valve not remaining at a sufficiently high pressure and creating underpressure in the mask, which caused the breathing air supply to stop.

Warning!

- Always check the certificates and other required documents before starting work: has the equipment got a certificate and has the right maintenance been carried out?
- Always follow the supplier's instructions regarding the maximum number of people connected up to a single reducer valve.
- Always check that the maximum hose length is appropriate for the breathing air line system. This is indicated on the system's rating plate.
- If there is any doubt, ask your supervisor or the QHSE/prevention adviser.

The SIR would like to emphasize that it is very important that incidents are reported, as lessons can be learned from them. What happened to someone else today could happen to you tomorrow!

For further information, please contact the SIR staff office via info@sir-safe.nl

