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**Medical Criteria for Respiratory Protection in Smoke: The Effectiveness of the Military Protective Mask**

Authors: [James C. Eaton](#); [John Y. Young](#); [ARMY BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LAB FORT DETRICK MD](#)

**Abstract:** This report summarizes the results of a study of existing information on the exposure of troops to smoke, the health hazards of the smoke, and particularly the ability of the M17 and M40 masks to protect the soldier against the hazards of exposure to military smokes and obscurants. The findings of the study are as follows: (a) the masking policy is necessary and sufficient to protect troops from the hazards of operating in smoke; (b) an alternative to the military mask for use with fog oil and diesel fuel smokes could be chosen from among the approved orinasal dust, fume, and mist respirators, but this type of protection would not be appropriate for HC, metal, or **phosphorus** smokes; (c) the greatest uncertainty in the assessment of health hazards from smoke and obscurants involves measurement of exposure, which determines the duration of effectiveness of the protection afforded by the mask in smoke; (d) special precautions should be taken when deploying HC smoke, which has caused fatalities when used improperly -- the masking policy must be strictly enforced, and HC should never be deployed in and enclosed space. Keywords: Hexachloroethane, **White phosphorus**, Red **phosphorus**, Toxic hazards. (aw)

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