



Smoke Helmet

The smoke helmet was designed to allow firefighters to enter buildings which were smoke logged, to carry out rescues or firefighting duties.

The equipment which was manufactured by Siebe Gorman consisted of a leather helmet fitted with an openable visor, a leather seal and ties, and an exhalation valve. Air was fed to the helmet by an armoured air hose supplied by bellows which could be operated by a foot pedal or a hand lever. On the bellows was a plate with the following instructions - One hoot - 'Help', Two Hoots - 'More air', Three Hoots - 'Less air'. A bulb and reed car horn was provided. In later models though, a speaking tube was incorporated in the air hose, thus allowing direct communication with the bellows operator.

If a good operator was on the bellows, the visor could be opened thus allowing the firefighter greater vision, the air pressure in the helmet keeping the smoke from affecting the wearer. Although effective in allowing firefighting or reconnaissance being carried out, the depth of entry into a building was determined by the length of the air hose. This equipment was superseded by the introduction of self contained oxygen breathing apparatus.

