**PRESS RELEASE**

The importance of safe and sustainable fire protection in mining

***26 May, 2015:*** *One of the most imminent risks involved with mining operations is fire – which is a constant threat in numerous applications, ranging from the battery operated head lights used for underground mining, to fuel storage for mobile mining equipment.*

A major obstacle to fire safety in the mining industry is that standard dry chemical powder (DCP) handheld extinguishers are specified onsite. Although DCP extinguishers are highly-effective in extinguishing flames, they offer minimal cooling properties.

This results in re-ignition of flames, particularly in fuel and rubber fires, thereby increasing the risk of property damage and loss of life. Rubber fires can occur on conveyor belts, tyres, and plastic or rubber pipes. In this scenario, a first responder would typically use a number of DCP extinguishers to subdue the recurring flames, while waiting until firefighters extinguish it permanently.

The powder inside DCP extinguishers also compacts as a result of vibration when placed on a moving vehicle. This compacted powder creates the risk of malfunction when activated, creating further health and safety concerns. As a result, DCP extinguishers placed on mobile equipment need to be serviced more frequently, which results in higher costs for mining operations.

DCP extinguishers also pose serious operator and environmental hazards too. When used in confined spaces, they can affect operator visibility, and excessive powder inhalation can prove to be fatal. Discharged powder often ends up in water ways and filtration systems, causing contamination or blockages, and the discarding and clean-up process can be long and costly.

**A more effective and environmentally-friendly alternative**

Leading environmental solutions company I-CAT recently introduced the new range of Water Mist handheld fire extinguishers to the local market. Utilising water as the main agent and nitrogen as a propellant, this handheld range is capable of extinguishing most types of fire, including; rubber and plastic fires; kitchen cooking oil fires; diesel and petrol fires; and electrical fires rated up to 350 kV.

Using patented technology from Europe, I-CAT fire division manager **Andro Gibhard** states that the atomised mist generated by the extinguisher gradually cools down a hot surface without causing thermal shock. “It creates a thermal heat radiation barrier between the operator and the fire, thereby preventing the operator from getting burned when operating the extinguisher.”

Gibhard highlights the fact that the Water Mist range is environmentally-friendly and ensures greater operator safety. “Each litre of water amounts to 120 m2 coverage capability, making it extremely safe and efficient. What’s more, the small quantity of water used also results in little to no redundancy or damage,” he continues.

The Water Mist range boasts an operational lifespan four to five times longer than standard DCP extinguishers, to ensure greater cost-savings too. The Water Mist extinguisher range received SABS approval at the end of 2014, and Gibhard is confident that it will be well-received by the local market. “The use of water and nitrogen is safer, more effective, and saves on maintenance and service costs – all of which are major benefits in modern-day mining,” he concludes.

***Ends***

**Notes to the editor**  
To download hi-res images for this release, please visit <http://media.ngage.co.za> and click the I-CAT link to view the company’s press office.

**About I-CAT**  
I-CAT is a leading environmental solutions company with a primary focus on supplying products and services that assist industrial clients in various aspects of environmental compliance. The company is well positioned to assist all its clients’ needs in environmental management regarding; dust suppression solutions, water solutions, environmental management services, carbon solutions, agro-forestry products and fire solutions.

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