



## RESPIRATORY PROTECTION A BASIC UNDERSTANDING

Always follow the established program for respirator selection and use.

Respiratory hazards in the workplace should be controlled whenever possible using engineering, work practice, or administrative controls. However, if these controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, appropriate respiratory protection must be used. Workers who are required to use respiratory protection to perform their work activities must participate in the employer's Respiratory Protection Program.

Employers should perform an analysis of specific hazards for each job to determine if and what type of respirator will be required. This analysis would include a review of safety data sheets (SDSs, formerly called MSDSs) for products being used and may also involve exposure monitoring.

Where respirators are necessary to protect the health of the employee or whenever respirators are required by the employer, the employer must establish and implement a written respiratory protection program with worksite-specific procedures.

Workers who are issued respirators must wear them, which is why they must fit properly and be comfortable to wear. Respirators must be worn throughout exposure, and that's why work requiring respirators ideally should be for short periods of time.

The following are some key things that employers and employees should keep in mind if respirators are used on your worksite:

### EMPLOYERS:

- Employers must provide the proper respirator for the hazards present. Single strap dust masks are not NIOSH-approved and do not protect from hazardous exposures.



- Employers must ensure that the workers using respirators have had medical evaluations and fit testing procedure performed.
- Employers must ensure that workers are trained in the proper use and limitations of the specific respirators being used and those employees are using their respirator and not someone else's.
- Employers must ensure that the procedures and schedules for cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, and otherwise maintaining the respirators are being followed.
- Employers should establish and follow procedures regarding what cartridges are to be utilized and how often they need to be replaced. Manufacturer guidelines must be followed.

### EMPLOYEES:

- Employees must inspect respirators before each use and during cleaning and need to perform a seal check each time they put it on.
- Employees must sure that they are using their respirator and not someone else's.
- Employees must perform a fit test for negative pressure respirators prior to initial use and when a different face piece is used.
- Employees must follow the procedures required by their employer for respirator use and maintenance.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- 1) Which of the following need to be completed prior to using a respirator?
  - a) A medical evaluation and fit test procedure must be performed.
  - b) The respirator needs to be inspected.
  - c) The user needs to perform a seal test.
  - d) All of the above.
- 2) Only NIOSH approved respirators should be used.
  - a) True
  - b) False
- 3) Respirators need to be inspected annually.
  - a) True
  - b) False: Respirators need to be inspected before each use and during cleaning.

Talk Given By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name**

**Signature**

Printed Name	Signature

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