



Train. Protect. Prevent.

RESPIRATOR SAFETY

As the need for safety in the workplace has increased, so has the use of respirators. Respirators can protect you from breathable chemicals, vapors, and dusts that could have serious health consequences. When there is a risk of exposure to harmful chemicals and dusts in the workplace, the employer must provide the respirator as well as the training to use them correctly.

Respirators must be OSHA approved and certified by NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health). The employer must provide a physician to medically clear you to use a respirator. A properly-fitted respirator will limit your oxygen intake, as you now have to breathe through filters. Now that you have the proper respirator and have been medically cleared to be in good enough health to use a respirator, you can begin your fit test. Fit testing is a vital step to using a respirator because we all have a different head size and shape. For the respirator to fit correctly, the proper size respirator must be worn, and it must be adjusted correctly. For the respirator to get a good seal, the wearer must not have facial hair that is obstructing the sealing surface of the respirator. In addition to the initial fit test, workers must be fit tested every year following to ensure they are still getting a proper fit. If there is a major physical change to that worker, they must be fit tested again. This can include major weight gain/loss, facial surgery, or an injury anything that could change the way the respirator would seal against your face.



You now have a respirator that fits properly and are able to work safely. The employer must educate the worker on when to wear it and what airborne hazards they will be exposed to. A respirator must be inspected prior to each use to ensure that it is clean, all straps are in good condition, and there is no damage to the sealing surface. After use, the respirator must be cleaned and stored in a manner that will keep it from getting contaminated or damaged. Never leave it hanging on a machine or lying around. The final step in maintaining your respirator is to routinely change out the filters, as recommended by the manufacturer. If for some reason that filter becomes compromised, change it immediately.

These are some of the requirements of a typical N95 particulate respirator. Make sure they fit properly, ensure that you are medically cleared to wear one, keep it clean, store it properly, and change the filters on time. Can anyone contribute a time that respirator safety was involved in your work? Can anyone recall a near miss or accident that could've been prevented?

Work Site Review: Hazards/Safety Suggestions

Company Name: _____ Work Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Employee Signatures: (continue on back of sheet if necessary)

(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced, or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness)

Manager/Supervisor's Signature: _____

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