

Respiratory protection program guidelines:

- Written worksite specific procedures
- Work area surveillance
- Air quality monitoring
- Proper respirator selection
- Medical evaluation
- Fit testing/documentation
- Inspection, cleaning, maintenance, and storage
- Training
- Program evaluations



Training procedures include how to clean, store, and maintain respirators

Training must include an explanation of:

- Why respirator use is necessary
- Reasoning for the selection type
- Respirator capabilities and limitations
- How to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of the respirator
- Importance of proper use
- How to inspect, put on, take off, and check the seals of the respirator
- Respirator maintenance and storage requirements
- How to use the respirator effectively in emergency situations including when the respirator malfunctions

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Respiratory Protection



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What is a respirator?

A respirator is a protective device that covers the nose and mouth or the entire face or head to guard the wearer against hazardous atmospheres.

Respirators may be:

- Disposable—particulate filtering facepieces
- Tight-fitting—half masks which cover the mouth and nose and full facepieces that cover the face from the hairline to below the chin
- Loose-fitting—hoods or helmets that cover the head completely which seal at the neck

When are respirators necessary?

When working in environments with insufficient oxygen or where harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, fumes, gases, vapors, or sprays are present respirators are required to protect from unhealthy exposures.

Potential health hazards from over-exposure may cause cancer, silicosis, lung impairment, other diseases, or death. Smoking cigarettes can intensify the adverse effects of these respiratory diseases.



Disposable
Respirator

Two types of respirators:

1. Air-purifying respirators (APR) use filters or sorbents to remove harmful substances from the air. They range from simple disposable masks to sophisticated silicone facepieces.
2. Atmosphere-supplying respirators provide breathable air from a clean air source. They include supplied-air respirators (SAR) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) units.



Half-mask
Respirator



SCBA
Respirator

Engineering and Administrative Controls Always Come First!

Respirators should only be used as a "last line of defense" when engineering and administrative controls are not feasible. Engineering control systems such as adequate ventilation or scrubbing of contaminants should be used to negate the need for respirators.

Strategies for preventing atmospheric contamination may include enclosing

or confining the contaminant-producing operation, exhausting the contaminant, or substituting with less toxic materials.



Workers wearing SCBA respirators to perform hazardous waste operations

How to ensure proper protection:

OSHA's respiratory standard requires that employers establish and maintain an effective respiratory protection program when workers must wear respirators to protect against workplace hazards.

Different hazards require different respirators, and workers are responsible for wearing the appropriate respirator and complying with the respiratory protection program.

The workers' equipment must be properly selected, used, and maintained. In addition workers must be medically cleared, fit tested, and trained in all aspects of the respiratory protection program.