



Toolbox Talks

Respiratory Protection



Where toxic substances are present in the workplace and engineering controls are inadequate to reduce or eliminate them, respirators are necessary.

When employees must work in environments with insufficient oxygen or where harmful dust, fog, smoke, mist, fumes, gases, vapors, or sprays are present, they need respirators.

➤ In general, respirators should be inspected for basic function prior to each use and cleaned as often as necessary to prevent the occurrence of unsanitary conditions.

OSHA Standard 1910.134(h)(3)(i)(A) All respirators used in routine situations shall be inspected before each use and during cleaning.

Respirators must be stored in such a way that protects them from damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture and damaging chemicals.

Employees must perform a user seal check each time they put on a tight-fitting respirator with a positive pressure check, a negative pressure check, or the manufacturer's recommended user seal check procedure.

All respirators that rely on a mask-to-face seal need to be annually checked with either qualitative or quantitative methods to determine whether the mask provides an acceptable fit to a wearer.

➤ Tight-fitting respirators should not be worn by employees who have facial hair or any condition that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal or valve function.

➤ Other PPE equipment that is required must be worn in such a manner that does not interfere with the seal of the facepiece to the face of the user.

➤ Respirators must not impair the worker's ability to see, hear, communicate, and move as necessary to perform the job safely.

Respirators must be cleaned and disinfected at the following intervals:

- Single Employee Use - as often as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition
- Multiple Employee Use - before being worn by different individuals
- Maintained for Emergency Use - after each use
- Used in Fit Testing and Training - after each use

➤ Before requiring respiratory protection, attempts should be made to control air contaminants in the workplace. Respirators are required when effective engineering controls are not feasible, while the engineering controls are in the process of being implemented, or if the controls do not fully protect the employees.

