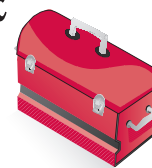


Supervisors Safety Bulletin™ Training Toolbox



This training tool is included with your membership to Supervisors Safety Bulletin – the latest news, rules, updates and training tools for a safe company and a safer workforce.

Respirator safety: What you need to know

■ The only way to protect yourself from harmful dust and fumes is to suit up!

The purpose of this session is to teach you how to protect yourself while working in areas with dangerous dusts, fumes and gases.

Why do you need a respirator?

Respirators are the only way to protect your lungs and life while working near dangerous fumes, gases and dusts.

Bottom line: Respirators keep the bad stuff out of your body.

And if there are toxins in the air, you need to wear one every shift.

When do you need one?

If you're working in an area where the air is contaminated by harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, sprays, mists or fumes, you need a respirator.

You will be fit tested for a respirator, but it's up to you to make sure your respirator fits properly every time you use it.

Proper wear

When you put on a respirator, follow these steps:

- Hold the respirator in your hand with the head straps hanging forward (over the nose clip)
- Place it over your nose and mouth



- Put the bottom elastic strap over your head, just below the ears
- Untwist the strap
- Stretch the top strap over your head, above the ears
- Carefully put the nose clip on your nose and adjust the respirator to create a tight fit on your face
- Test the tightness of the fit by covering the front of the respirator with both hands and inhaling deeply, and
- If there are air leaks, readjust the nose clip.

Remember: *If the respirator doesn't fit properly, it's not doing its job. And that means you could inhale fumes that could kill you!*

List of don'ts

When wearing a respirator, certain things can ruin the fit and seal.

Watch out for:

- **Beards:** Facial hair can break the seal of a respirator.
- **Earrings and necklaces:** Fashion accessories can ruin the respirator fit. Don't wear them!
- **Long hair:** Hair should be pulled back tightly.

MORE RESPIRATOR TIPS

What should you do if you think your respirator isn't working while you're in a contaminated area? You should leave the area and remove your respirator if:

- You detect an odd odor or taste
- Your eyes or throat begin to feel irritated
- There's a change in your breathing
- You notice your face piece is leaking or other parts of the respirator aren't working correctly, and/or
- An alarm sounds, signaling equipment failure.

Heads up: You should never remove your respirator in a contaminated area. Leave the area first, then remove it.

You may need an air supplying respirator. Most respirators protect you from dust and fumes; others supply clean oxygen while you work. So when would you need to use one?

Some numbers to note:

- **20.9% oxygen level:** Safe, normal breathing atmosphere
- **19.5% or lower:** This amount of oxygen in the air can lead to a serious injury
- **6% or lower:** If there's only this much oxygen in the air, it could be fatal and you should leave the area ASAP.

Training Session Quiz

NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

1 You need to wear an air-supplying respirator when you're working in an area with too much oxygen.

true false

2 If your eyes or throat become irritated, you should take off your respirator right away.

true false

3 20.9% oxygen levels mean the air is safe.

true false

4 Once your respirator fits, you don't need to check the fit again.

true false

5 After you've put on your respirator, you should cover the front of it with your hands and inhale deeply to see if it's working.

true false

6 Earrings and necklaces are the only two things that can impact respirator fit.

true false

7 An odd odor or taste is a sign that your respirator isn't doing its job.

true false

8 If you notice a change in your breathing, you should immediately remove your respirator.

true false

9 If there's only a little bit of hazardous dust in the air, it's OK to skip using your respirator.

true false

10 If there's only 6% of oxygen or less in the air, it could be fatal and you should leave the area immediately.

true false

ANSWERS

1. *False.* You should use an air-supplying respirator when there isn't enough oxygen in the air.
2. *False.* If your eyes or throat become irritated, you should leave the area and then take off the respirator.
3. *True.* An area with 20.9% oxygen level is safe and you won't need to use an air-supplying respirator.
4. *False.* You must check your respirator for fit every single time you use it. Using a respirator that doesn't fit properly even once can be fatal.
5. *True.* Covering the front of the respirator with your hands and inhaling will help you identify any leaks in the seal where hazardous dust or fumes could get in.
6. *False.* Hair and facial hair can also impact the fit of your respirator. Keep beards shaven and tie back long hair to create the best fit and protect yourself.
7. *True.* If you notice an odd taste or smell, you should leave the area immediately and then take it off.
8. *False.* Never take off a respirator in a dangerous area.
9. *False.* Even a little hazardous dust can be deadly. You need to wear your respirator whenever there are hazardous dusts or fumes.
10. *True.* 6% of oxygen or less in the air can kill you. You must wear an air-supplying respirator or leave the area.

PUTTING IT ON AND TAKING IT OFF



Respirators, like other PPE, need to be put on correctly and worn the right way.

Here's the order you should put your PPE on in:

- Gown
- Mask/respirator
- Goggles/face shields, and then
- Gloves

When it's time to take your PPE off, do it in the reverse order to minimize the spread of dusts or fumes.