

# SAFETY MESSAGE

## Personal Safety is our #1 priority

### Respirator Fit Test and Maintenance

#### Environments That Require Respirators

**OSHA respirator program** The OSHA General Industry Standard for Respiratory Products (29 CFR 1910.134) requires that a written respiratory protection program be established by the employer.

Written standard operating procedures are essential to maintain a consistent and uniform respirator program.

**Respirator user reminders**

As a respirator user you should:

- Check the respirator fit after donning it as instructed.
- Use the respirator as instructed.
- Guard against damaging your respirator.
- Go immediately to an area having breathable air if the respirator fails to provide proper protection.
- Report any respirator malfunction to your supervisor.

**Who can use a respirator**

Only those workers who have been evaluated by a physician and been found medically qualified should be assigned to respirator work.

#### Respirator Fit Test

**Positive pressure test**

Check the respirator's fit by covering the exhalation valve so that air cannot escape through it; then exhale gently.

When the respirator fits correctly, the mask will bulge. You should feel increased air pressure until you inhale or uncover the valve. This means that no air is escaping the mask.

**Negative pressure test**

Next, do a negative pressure test by covering the filters of the respirator with your palms and inhale.

The soft parts of the respirator should collapse inward toward your face and remain that way as long as you are inhaling. When the respirator fits correctly, it should be difficult to inhale. This means that no air is getting into the mask from the edges.

**Fit test frequency**

The positive and negative pressure tests must be performed each time

you use your respirator.

Enter your work area only if your respirator passes the tests.

## **Respirator Maintenance**

### **Maintenance guidelines**

Your respirator should be maintained by persons trained to do so. New valves, hoses, and other parts should be installed according to company policy, or when they appear worn.

Use only approved parts. Avoid exchanging parts from one model to another.

### **Inspection**

Inspect your respirator carefully before putting it on each time you use it.

Look for cracks, dents, or holes in the mask, and broken or worn straps or buckles. Elastic straps that have lost their stretch need to be replaced. You need a new respirator if the flexible material around the edges have become hard and brittle because it will no longer provide a tight seal on your face.

Valves must be clean and functioning properly. Dry, cracked valves should be replaced.

### **Replace filters**

Check the cartridges or filters of your APR before each use. Are they changed according to company policy? Are they the right cartridges for your job?

Remember that APR cartridges will filter out only the contaminants for which they were designed.

When replacing cartridges, be sure they are threaded properly. Do pressure tests after replacing cartridges or filters.

### **Keep it clean**

Clean your respirator after each use according to the manufacturer's instructions. For most respirators, this means washing in mild soapy water and scrubbing with a soft brush if necessary.

Rinse in clean, warm water, and dry according to instructions. If sanitizing is necessary, leave the respirator in the recommended disinfecting solution for at least 2 minutes and rinse thoroughly.

Never use solvents or harsh cleaning agents on rubber or plastic parts.

### **Store it carefully**

Sunlight and chemicals in the atmosphere can damage your respirator. Seal your thoroughly dry respirator in a plastic bag and store it away from direct sunlight.

Avoid placing objects on top of it. It will not fit properly if it loses its shape.

### **Be alert**

Your safety on the job depends on your ability to wear a properly functioning respirator and still do your job.

Check with your supervisor if your respirator interferes with your ability to see, hear or be heard properly, or if it restricts movement so that you

cannot safely do your work.

Leave your work area immediately and report to your supervisor if you experience difficulty in breathing, fatigue, irritation in your eyes or respiratory system, dizziness, or illness. These could be warning signs that your respirator is not working properly.

Your on-the-job respiratory health is guaranteed when you properly maintain, store, and use your respirator.