Care For Your Respirator

Your respirator (RPE) provides protection against the breathing in of airborne contaminants.

Your employer is responsible for providing you with the proper type of respirator for the given exposure along with training in its use.

You and your employer share responsibility for making certain that your respirator is functioning as intended for your protection.

The following is a list of general rules to help you care for and maintain your respirator:

- The disposable filter cartridges usually contain a chemical absorbent to trap contaminants. The filter cartridge should be replaced immediately if it becomes more difficult to inhale. It should also be changed if you begin to smell or taste the contaminant.
- You should thoroughly inspect your respirator on a daily basis or before each use. Examine the elastic headband(s) to ensure it has not lost elasticity. Also check the headband for tears, frays, and loose strands. Take the cartridges off and examine the cartridge housing to make certain it is not cracked. Check the cartridge threads to ensure they are not stripped or damaged in any way. Check the face piece for tears, cuts, or holes. Inspect the exhaust valves and intake valve to make certain they are not sticking or damaged.
- Re-useable respirators. Clean your respirator after each use. The cleaning process usually consists of washing, disinfecting, rinsing, and drying. You should refer to the manufacturer’s suggestions for specific instructions. Most face pieces can be washed with warm water. Disinfecting with a disinfectant cleaner or germicidal detergent is a commonly acceptable practice. Rinsing should be done with water. Air drying is usually preferred as towel drying or heated quick drying may cause damage.
- It is important to store your respirator properly. Your respirator should be protected from heat, sunlight, dust, and vapour contaminants. Storage in a sealed plastic bag is the preferred practice. Be careful not to cram the respirator in a tight space or store it in an awkward position as both of these practices may warp the respirator permanently and alter the fit.
- Do a “fit-check” often to make certain that you have a good seal. This can be done by covering the exhalation valve with your hand and gently exhaling into the face piece. If air leaks out during gentle exhaling, the seal and face piece should be checked by your Supervisor and replaced as appropriate.

If you take good care of your respirator, it will take good care of you!

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