



GOALS

This safety session will teach trainees that:

- Your respirator must fit properly in order to protect you.
- You should always check your respirator carefully each time before you wear it.

Applicable Regulations: 29 CFR 1910.134



1. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require workers to use respirators to protect themselves when there is a serious threat to their health.

- Conditions include areas with airborne contaminants, such as chemical vapors, gases, or dust; too little oxygen; or other serious health hazards.
- Employers must provide training in respirator use and proper fit—respirators won't protect workers unless they are used properly.
- Different types of respirators are designed to protect against different health hazards.
- With **air-purifying respirators**, the air passes through a filter, cartridge, or canister that removes specific contaminants.
- **Atmosphere-supplying respirators**—either self-contained breathing apparatuses (SCBAs) or supplied-air respirators (SARs)—provide you with breathing air from an independent source.

2. Not all workers can wear respirators safely—they must all have medical evaluations before they can be fit tested.

- Fit tests must use the same respirator make, model, style, and size that will be used on the job.
- OSHA requires a fit test:
 - Before a worker first uses the respirator on the job;
 - Whenever a different respirator face piece is used;
 - At least annually after the first test; *and*
 - When a physical change could affect respirator fit (e.g., facial hair, cosmetic surgery, dental changes, or an obvious change in body weight).

3. Check out the appropriate respirators for the job hazard; select one and try it for at least 5 minutes to see if it is comfortable for you.

- Check for positioning on the face and room for eye protection.
- Check for chin and nose placement and distance.
- Check strap tension.
- Check for ability to talk while wearing the respirator.
- Check to be sure there is a good fit without slippage, even if you move about as you would on the job.



4. OSHA requires employers whose workplaces require respiratory protection to have a written respiratory protection program, including worksite-specific procedures and employee training.

- OSHA requires special fit-testing procedures to make sure each individual is getting a good seal. The two basic fit-testing procedures are:
 - **Qualitative fit tests (QLFTs).** These “pass/fail” tests assess the respirator’s fit based on the individual’s response to a test agent’s smell, taste, or irritation.
 - **Quantitative fit tests (QNFTs).** These tests assess fit by numerically measuring the amount of leakage into the respirator.

5. Workers must also perform a user seal check each time they use a tight-fitting respirator.

- Your supervisor will show you how to do such a check for the type of respirator you are using—be sure you understand how to do the test correctly.
- With a **positive pressure** respirator, the air pressure inside the face piece exceeds the air pressure outside the respirator.
- For a positive pressure seal check, cover the exhalation valve and exhale gently—the mask should inflate slightly, with no evidence of leaks.
- With a **negative pressure** respirator, the air pressure inside the face piece is less than the air pressure in the air outside the respirator.
- For a negative pressure seal check, cover the inlet opening, inhale gently, and hold your breath—the face piece should remain deflated, with no inward leakage of outside air.
- When you’re wearing a respirator on the job, leave the work area immediately if you notice:
 - Vapor or gas getting into your breathing zone;
 - Face piece leakage; *or*
 - Changes in your breathing resistance.
- Don’t reenter the respirator use area until your respirator is repaired or replaced.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

What specific hazards are present in your workplace that make respirator use necessary?



CONCLUSION:

Be sure your respirator fits properly, that you know how to use it, and that it is in good condition so that it provides the necessary protection to keep you safe.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your employees take the Proper Fit for Respirators quiz to see if they understand how to be sure their respirators fit properly or whether they need to review this important topic again soon.