Taking Care of your Respirator

**DOs**

- Store your dry respirator face up in a plastic bag.
- Stay clean shaven to achieve the best seal possible.
- After every use, using a mild soap and water or respirator wipes, clean the inside of your respirator first, and then clean the outside.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles on the outside of your mask to allow for the best possible seal.
- Return unused or unwanted respirators to EH&S (M/C 0958) with your contact information. You will be removed from the RPP.

**DON’Ts:**

- Don’t share your respirator. The respirator issued to you is for your use only.
- Don’t store respirators in your car or in a sunny, warm location.
- Don’t store respirators on a hook, with the face piece distorted, or with any heavy objects on top.
- Don’t clean your respirator with alcohol. Use respirator wipes or mild soap and water.
- Don’t chew gum, eat, or smoke while wearing your respirator.

Find more information on Blink at: [http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/respirator](http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/respirator)

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Respiratory Protection Program

Respirators should be used as a last line of defense when administrative and/or engineering controls are not adequate.

**Requirements of the RPP**

Employees who need a respirator must first receive certification through the RPP administered by EH&S. The program ensures employees who use respirators understand their capabilities and limitations. Employees must be:

- Medically approved by UCSD Occupational & Environmental Medicine
- Individually fitted for a respirator and pass a qualitative or quantitative fit test
- Trained on use, limitations, and proper maintenance of respirators
- Issued respirators and cartridges specifically for the type of materials or atmosphere to be encountered
- Issued a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) detailing use, maintenance, and storage.

Annual certification is required. EH&S will notify you at renewal time.

How to Perform a Seal Check

**ALWAYS** perform a seal check before you using your respirator to ensure a proper seal.

- **Positive Seal Check:** Cover the exhalation valve and breathe out. You should not feel any air leaking out around your face.
- **Negative Seal Check:** Cover the filters and breathe in. The respirator should slightly collapse around the nose and cheek area.
Know your personal limitations. Be able to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of your respirator.

Types of Respirators and Limitations

Air Purifying Respirators (APR), Negative Pressure

Filtering Face Piece (N-95 Masks) – Because of the limited fit, use the N-95 only for nuisance particulates.

Half-face Mask – Does not provide protection against eye irritation or splashes to the face.

Full-face Mask – Provides protection to the face and eyes but is heavier and bulkier.

When can an APR be used?

• In atmospheres where the oxygen level is between 19.5%-23.5%
• In routine predictable situations (not for emergency, escape, or fire fighting)
• When the chemical contaminant has good warning properties
• When the chemical concentration is less than the Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) concentration

Supplied Air, Positive Pressure

With proper training, supplied air respirators can be used in unknown atmospheres, IDLH, or oxygen deficient environments.

• Supplied Air – Air supplied to user by a hose. (Note: an escape respirator may be required.)
• Self Contained Breathing Apparatus – 30 or 60 minute air supply carried by user.

Cartridges

Cartridge Change Out

The time period during which protection is provided by your respirator is dependent on:

• Canister, cartridge, or filter type
• Concentration of the contaminant
• Relative humidity level
• The user’s respiratory rate

As a last resort, change out your cartridge before you smell or taste anything.

Keep track of how long you’ve used a particular cartridge so you can change it before a break through occurs.

Particulate cartridges should be changed before they become restrictive or difficult to breathe through.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Types of Cartridges

Several types of cartridges exist. Use the cartridge type specific to your respirator’s manufacturer.

Important: Check the MSDS of the product BEFORE you begin work to ensure your cartridge will provide adequate protection.