

## 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.

#### 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.

### 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>

Environment, Health & Safety  
Phone: (858) 534-8780  
E-mail: [ehsih@ucsd.edu](mailto:ehsih@ucsd.edu)



## 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.

## 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.