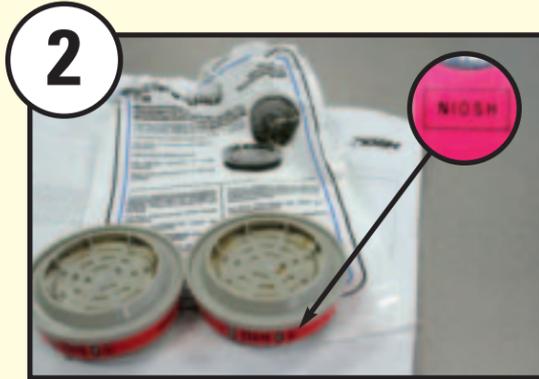


RESPIRATOR BASICS



1

- There are many kinds of respirators available. Choose the right one for the job.
- To see what kind of respirator you need, read the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the controlled chemical or product to which you will be exposed.
- If it doesn't say, or if there's no MSDS, refer to the Respirator Chart in CSAO's *Construction Health and Safety Manual* (on www.csa.org) or consult the manufacturer.



2

- Make sure your filters are all approved by NIOSH, the US-based National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.
- Always follow all of the manufacturer's instructions. Keep the instructions for future reference.



3

- Get a "fit test" by a qualified person who is trained to do it.
- The tester should use a procedure that complies with CSA standard Z94.4-02
- The test checks if the respirator fits your face properly.



4

- Inspect your respirator for defects, cracking, and areas that are wearing out.
- Don't use the respirator if there's a problem. Tell your supervisor.



5

You must be clean shaven to wear the kind of respirator that requires a tight seal with your face. Any facial hair, even short stubble, can seriously compromise the seal.



6

Adjust the facepiece and the straps so that the respirator fits your face snugly. There must be a good seal between the respirator and your face.



7

Do a "negative-pressure seal check":

- Block the filter inlets with your hands.
- Inhale and hold for 5 seconds.
- The mask should collapse slightly, but it should not allow air into the facepiece.
- If there's a leak, try it again. If there's still a leak, don't use the respirator. Tell your supervisor.



8

Do a "positive-pressure seal check" (only after you've done the negative-pressure seal check):

- Block the exhaust port with your hand.
- Exhale for 5-10 seconds.
- The mask should expand outward slightly, but it should not allow air to escape.
- If there's a leak, try it again. If there's still a leak, don't use the respirator. Tell your supervisor.
- If there is no leak, you can start work.



9

If you're using a dust mask:

- Pinch the metal nose clip so that it forms a tight seal to your nose.
- Adjust the respirator until you feel that there's a good fit.
- Get a fit test (see #3, above) and if there is a leak, don't use the respirator. Tell your supervisor.
- If there is no leak, you can start work.



10

When you've finished your work, follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the respirator facepiece. This usually means:

- removing the cartridges and filters
- immersing the facepiece in warm water with a mild detergent
- cleaning it with soft brush or sponge
- rinsing it in warm water, then air drying.



11

Store your respirator according to the manufacturer's instructions. Store it in a clean area away from dust, chemicals, sunlight, heat, extreme cold, excessive moisture, tools, and equipment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND DETAILS,

see the section on Respiratory Protection in CSAO's *Construction Health and Safety Manual*.

You can download it for free at www.csa.org, or call CSAO for your copy: 1-800-781-2726.



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