

# RESPIRATOR REVIEW (1/2 MASK)

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## Things to Do Before Training

- Have a sample half-mask respirator on hand with the correct filters or cartridges for the hazard present on this job site.
- Know the company practices regarding how respirators are provided, stored, and cleaned, and who is in charge of the company respirator program.
- In the index of the *Cal/OSHA Pocket Guide for the Construction Industry*, look up **Respirator Protection** and read the pages listed.

## Introduction

Half-mask respirators can be used with the appropriate filter or cartridge to reduce exposure to many toxic substances. The filters or cartridges remove dusts or vapors from the air you breathe.

They do not supply oxygen, so they can't help you if there is not enough oxygen.

Half-mask respirators also can't be used in situations where there are very high levels of contaminants. Air monitoring is the only way to know for sure how much of the contaminant is in the air.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- For what substance(s) and tasks on this job site do we need to wear respirators? What is the correct type of cartridge or filter?
- Why do workers need a medical evaluation before using a respirator?
- How can you be sure that your respirator fits properly?
- Can you think of any other ways we can improve our use of respirators?  
(For example: better cleaning, storage, maintenance, and inspection)

SAFETY  BREAK

## ACTIONS TO TAKE

- Ask workers - who has received respirator training? medical clearance? fit testing?
- Follow up to ensure that these things are provided to any worker required to wear a respirator.
- Demonstrate both negative and positive seal checks (*see below*).

## Key Points to Keep in Mind

- Respirators can put **too much strain** on the heart and lungs, so all respirator users must first be provided with a medical evaluation.
- The **correct filter or cartridge** must be used based on the type of hazard (for example, P-100 filters protect against toxic dusts, not toxic gases).
- The respirator **must fit well**. This is done by periodic fit testing and daily seal checks.
- Adequate **training** must be provided on how to use and care for the respirator.
- Do a “user seal check” every time** you put on a respirator, and periodically while wearing it.
- Do both a **positive seal check** and a **negative seal check**.

### Negative Seal Check

- Put on the face piece and adjust it to fit comfortably – snug, not overly tight.
- Block the air inlets on the filters or cartridges with your hands.
- Try to breathe in and hold your breath 10 seconds.
- If there are no leaks, the face piece should collapse slightly and stay like that.
- If you find a leak, adjust the face piece or straps and repeat the test until you get a good fit.



### Positive Seal Check

- Put on the face piece and adjust it to fit comfortably – snug, not overly tight.
- Block the exhalation valve. This is usually on the bottom of the respirator.
- Try to breathe out gently. Wait a few seconds.
- If there are no leaks, the face piece should puff slightly away from your face and air should not leak out.
- If you find a leak, adjust the face piece or straps and repeat the test until you get a good fit.

