



Weekly Safety Tip

Courtesy of R. Scott Goodwin, [SSOE, Inc.](#)

Do your employees ever use respirators? Do you know what is required to have an employee use a respirator? This week we break down the OSHA requirement for using respirators. Remember, for Safety’s Sake, Do Something!!

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“For Safety’s Sake - Do Something”

SSOE GROUP IS A PROJECT DELIVERY FIRM FOR ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT.

Proper Respiratory Protection

Employees need to wear the proper respirator when working in environments with insufficient oxygen or where harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, fumes, gases, vapors, or sprays are present. These types of hazardous exposures may cause cancer, lung impairment, other diseases, or even death.

What has to happen in order for me to use a respirator? The OSHA 1910.134 *Respiratory Protection Standard* contains requirements for program administration, worksite-specific procedures, respirator selection, employee training, fit testing, medical evaluation, and respirator use, cleaning, maintenance, and repair. Employees must understand each of these areas as covered in training. Employers must develop training programs that are comprehensive enough for the employee to demonstrate a knowledge of the limitations and capabilities for the respirator, why the respirator is necessary, and how to determine proper fit, usage, and maintenance.

In order to wear a respirator at SSOE, employees must contact the Safety Department via HelpDesk to request a respirator. The employee will need to provide the following information:

- Location
- State why the respirator is needed
- Duration of use
- Receive the Employee Medical Evaluation
- Be scheduled for their Respiratory/Medical Clearance
- Be fit tested and trained

The Safety Department will provide the correct respirator needed based on the information provided. Employees must also be clean shaven within 24 hours and with no more than a moustache.

A “dust mask” is a respirator if in an area where a respirator is required or will be needed based on the exposure.

What are the differences in respirators? Employers must consider the chemical and physical properties of the contaminant, as well as the toxicity and concentration of the hazardous material and the amount of oxygen present. Other selection factors are nature and extent of the hazard, work rate, area to be covered, mobility, work requirements and conditions, as well as the limitations and characteristics of the available respirators. Air-purifying respirators use filters or sorbents to remove harmful substances from the air. They range from simple disposable masks to sophisticated devices. They do not supply oxygen and must not be used in oxygen-deficient atmospheres or in other atmospheres that are Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH).

Types of Respirators

 PAPR Hood	 SCBA
 Supplied Air Hood	 Full Face Air Purifying
 Supplied Air Full Face	 Half Face Air Purifying
	 Two-Strap Air Purifying



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