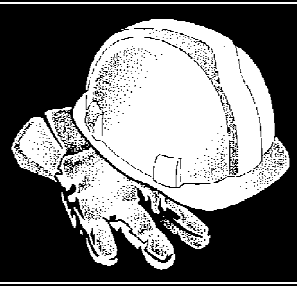
TRAINING GUIDE

RESPIRATORS



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Before you begin the meeting...

☐ *Does this topic relate to the work the crew is doing? If not, choose another topic.*

☐ *Did you read this Training Guide and fill in the blanks where the ___ appears? (To find the information you need, look over the Safety Walkaround Checklist for this topic.)*

☐ *Did you bring a dust mask, an air purifying respirator with cartridges, and an air supplied respirator (if available) to demonstrate to the crew?*

Begin: If you're worried about breathing toxic chemicals on the job, you can always put on a dust mask, right? *(Show the crew the dust mask you brought to the meeting.)*

Wrong! Dust masks are good for keeping out most large particles of dust, but that's about all they do. They don't stop chemical fumes, vapors, or even very small dust particles.

Respirators are a lot more effective. They may not be the best way to prevent chemical exposure, but for many construction jobs they are the only practical way. Just wearing any old mask isn't enough. You have to use the right respirator for the job, it has to fit properly, and you have to be trained how to use it. Otherwise, you only have the illusion of protection.

You or a crew member may want to add a personal story about the importance of respirators.

Next, discuss with the crew what chemical hazards at this particular job site may require respirators:

_____

_____

ASK THE CREW THESE QUESTIONS:

After each question, give the crew time to suggest possible answers. Use the information following each question to add points that no one mentions.

1. What are the different types of respirators?

- There are many types. The kind you should use depends on the **particular chemical** you're exposed to, **how much** you're exposed to, and **how long** you'll be exposed.
- **Air purifying respirators (APRs)** filter chemicals from the air before you breathe it. They remove toxic fumes, vapors, and dust particles so small that they could go through a dust mask. APRs use disposable filter cartridges. *(Show the crew the APR you brought to the meeting.)*

- **Air supplied respirators** ("airline" respirators or "SCBAs") have their own supply of air. You need them where an APR can't give you enough protection, or where there isn't enough oxygen. *(If applicable, show the crew an air supplied respirator.)*

2. How do you find out if you need to wear a respirator, and which kind you need?

- You **can't** always tell if you need a respirator from the odor, taste, or physical symptoms that a chemical causes. A chemical that doesn't smell bad, make your eyes water, or irritate your throat might still be dangerous. Some very hazardous chemicals don't produce these effects at all. These chemicals have poor **warning properties**.
- The **Material Safety Data Sheet** (MSDS) for the chemical product you're using may tell you if you need a respirator. MSDSs are required by law. They'll tell you the ingredients in a product and possible health hazards. Everyone working on the site has a right to see MSDSs.
- If you need to use a respirator, the company is required to tell you and give you the right type.

3. If you use an APR, you need to use the right cartridge for the specific chemical you're exposed to. How can you be sure you have the right cartridge?

(As you go over the following points, show the crew sample cartridges.)

- The cartridge **label** should tell you which chemicals it's designed for. There is also a **color code** on cartridges. Remember that a chemical may go right through a cartridge that's designed for some other chemical!
- Use cartridges and replacement parts designed for your **particular brand and model** of respirator. **Both sides** of the respirator should have identical cartridges.
- Cartridges (and the respirator itself) should be **approved** by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) or the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Check the label.

On this job, we will be using ☐ APRs or ☐ air supplied respirators.

For APRs, the type of cartridge we will be using is: _____

The cartridge protects you from (type of chemical): _____

The cartridge is color coded: _____

4. I'm going to read some statements. Tell me which are true, and which are false.

(a) **If you're going to wear a respirator on the job, the company must give you a medical exam to make sure you can wear a respirator safely.** (True)

(b) **We must teach you how to use a respirator and take care of it.** (True)

(c) **Once you get a fit-test to make sure the respirator fits your face properly, you'll never need another fit-test.** (False. You should be fit-tested at least once a year, and more often if you're exposed to certain substances like asbestos.)

(d) **You can only wear the brand, model, and size of respirator that you are fit-tested for.** (True)

(e) **It's OK to wear a respirator if you have a beard, long mustache, or long sideburns.** (False. They may interfere with the respirator seal.)

5. What do you have to do every time you put a respirator on?

- **Inspect** the respirator. Make sure the facepiece, straps, and valves are in good shape.
- Do a negative and positive **pressure test** as soon as you get it on.

Using the sample APRs you brought to the meeting, demonstrate a negative and a positive pressure test. If necessary, consult site safety personnel to learn this simple procedure. Also see the Glossary.

6. When should you change cartridges in your respirator?

- It depends on the cartridge type and the particular substance involved.

On this job, the cartridges we use should be changed at least:_____

- In addition, change your cartridge if it gets hard to breathe through, if it gets wet, if you detect the odor of the chemical, or if you notice symptoms of chemical exposure.

7. How should you store a respirator when you're done using it?

- First clean it. Make sure it's dry, and then store it in a plastic bag in a clean area.
- Don't take it off the job site with you if it may be contaminated.

8. What should you do if your respirator feels too hot or uncomfortable to wear?

- Some are more comfortable than others. You may need to try a different size, model, or type of respirator. (Remember you need to be fit-tested on the new respirator!)
- It may be possible to rotate job assignments, so you spend less time in areas where you need a respirator.
- Talk to me and we'll see what we can work out. Don't just quit wearing your respirator because it's uncomfortable! Discomfort is a lot better than serious illness.

CAL/OSHA REGULATIONS

Explain: Most of the safety measures we've talked about are required by Cal/OSHA. We have to take these precautions—it's the law. I have a Checklist of the Cal/OSHA regulations on respirators. If you'd like to know more, see me after the meeting. Also, Cal/OSHA requires our company to have a written Respiratory Protection Program. I have copies.

COMPANY RULES

(Only if applicable.) Besides the Cal/OSHA regulations, we have some additional company rules about respirators.

Discuss company rules: _____

_____

COMMENTS FROM THE CREW

Ask: **Do you have any other concerns about respirators? Do you see any problems on our job?** *(Let the steward answer first, if there is one.)*

What about other jobs you've worked on? Have you had any experience with respirators that might help us work safer on this job?

GENERAL SAFETY DISCUSSION

This is a time to discuss all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during, and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any hazards from other crews? *Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.*

Do we have any old business? *Discuss past issues/problems. Report progress of investigations and action taken.*

Any new business? Any accidents/near misses/complaints? *Discuss accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.*

Please remember, we want to hear from you about *any* health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

To complete the training session:

- ☐ *Circulate Sign-Off Form.*
- ☐ *Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.*
- ☐ *Refer action items for follow-up. (Use the sample **Hazard Report Form** in the Reference Section of this binder, or your company's own form.)*

SIGN-OFF FORM
RESPIRATORS

Date Presented: _____ By: _____

Project Name/No.: _____ Location: _____

NAMES OF THOSE WHO ATTENDED THIS SAFETY MEETING

PRINTED NAME	*SIGNATURE*