

Respirator Maintenance and Use Guidelines Reference: www.3m.com

General Use Information

- Prohibiting conditions that could cause seal leakage, like facial hair.
- Enforcing the practice of performing a user seal check each time workers put on the respirator.
- Making sure employees keep their respirator on and operating effectively while in hazardous environments.

If air-purifying respirators are used, they may have an end-of-service-life indicator (ESLI) certified by NIOSH for the contaminant.



If there's no ESLI appropriate for conditions in the workplace, then implement a change schedule for canisters and cartridges, based on objective information or data, to ensure they're changed before the end of their service life. Keep a record in your respiratory program explaining the information and data relied upon, the basis for the change schedule, and the basis for using that data.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

OSHA provides procedures for cleaning and disinfecting, or you can use the procedures recommended by the respirator manufacturer in the user instructions.

The frequency of cleaning and disinfection depends on how you use the respirator.

- Respirators used exclusively by an employee: as often as necessary to be sanitary.
- Respirators used by more than one employee: before it's worn by a different person.
- Emergency-use respirators: after each use.
- Respirators used in fit testing and training: after each use.

Identification of Equipment

All filters, cartridges, and canisters are labeled and color-coded with the NIOSH approval label. The label should not be removed and must remain legible.

Storage

All respirators should be stored to protect them from damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and damaging chemicals. Make sure the way they're packed doesn't distort the facepiece and exhalation valve and that they are not hung by their straps.

Inspection

Make sure to have your respirators inspected before each use and during cleaning. Keep all information on file until next inspection. Respirator inspections should include a check of:

- Respirator function.
- Tightness of connections.
- The pliability of elastomeric parts.
- The condition of the various parts including the facepiece, head straps, valves, connecting tube, cartridges, canisters or filters.

Repairs

If a respirator fails an inspection or isn't working, you may discard, repair or adjust it. OSHA states that:

- Only workers trained to do so can make repairs or adjustments to respirators.
- You should use only the respirator manufacturer's NIOSH-approved parts. Multiple manufacturer parts cannot be used in one respirator system and doing so will void NIOSH approval and is an OSHA citable offense.
- Repairs should be made according to the manufacturer's recommendations and specifications for the type and extent of repairs to be performed.
- Reducing and admission valves, regulators, and alarms should be adjusted or repaired only by the manufacturer or a trained technician.