

RESPIRATORS – MAINTENANCE

IDENTIFY

To provide protection, respirators must be properly maintained. Dirty, missing, or damaged parts can prevent your respirator from working properly.

For instance, valves that are damaged, missing, or poorly seated can drastically reduce the protection provided by your respirator.

There is also a danger in sharing respirators — it is not hygienic.

COMMUNICATE AND CONTROL

The Workplace Safety and Health Regulation Part 6.15 outlines the recommendations for proper respirator maintenance.

Particulate respirator filters are identified by a letter and a number. The letters are:

- N** – not resistant to oil
- R** – resistant to oil
- P** – oil-proof

The numbers are 95, 99, and 100. These indicate the efficiency: 95 per cent, 99 per cent, 99.9 per cent (100).

Filter cartridges for chemicals such as ammonia, organic vapours, solvents, or acid gases use different filter technology. Look at the cartridge before selecting a respirator.

With use, filters become harder to breathe through. You are breathing not only through the filter, but also through the contaminants that build up on the outside of the filter.

As gas and organic vapour filters are used, their ability to remove gases and vapours decreases.

A filter must be changed if:

- It is damaged.
- It becomes difficult to breathe through.
- The replacement period specified by the manufacturer is reached.
- The cartridge displays an “end-of-service-life” indicator.

Leave a contaminated area and change filters right away if:

- You can smell or taste the contaminant through the filter.
- Your throat or lungs feel irritated.

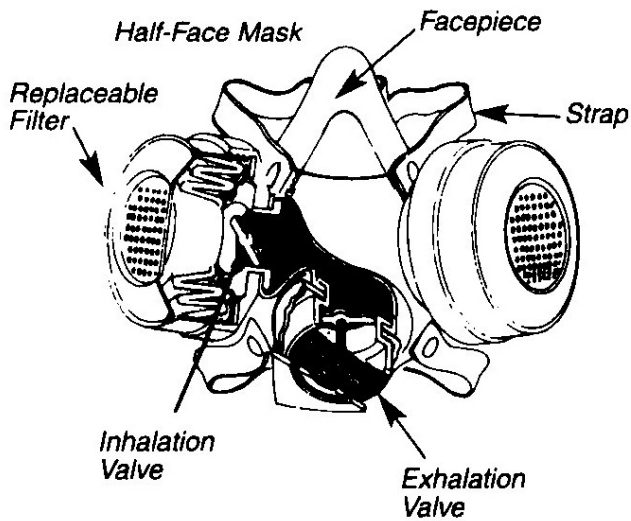
Each worker should have their own respirator. Before a respirator is used for a different worker, it must be washed and disinfected. Check the manufacturer’s instructions.

Store respirators in a dry location away from dust, chemicals, oil, and grease. Protect it from the sun, excessive heat and cold, and vermin.

FACTS AND TIPS

- Demonstrate what to look for when inspecting a respirator. Inspect two or three respirators in use. Make necessary adjustments and arrange repairs or replacements.
- Check the facepiece for holes, cracks, and splits. Check the inhalation valves for damage, dust and dirt, and proper seating.
- Remove filters and make sure that flapper valve (usually a flexible disk) isn’t missing or damaged. Make sure the flapper valve is seated properly in the valve assembly.
- Remove the cover at the bottom of the respirator to inspect the exhalation valve. Check the valve for damage, dirt, and proper seating. Make sure that straps and buckles are free of damage and working properly.

FACTS AND TIPS



THE QUIZ

- To provide protection, respirators must be properly maintained:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- Dirty, missing, or damaged parts can prevent your respirator from working properly:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- There is also a danger in sharing respirators — it is not hygienic:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- A letter and a number identify particulate respirator filters. What do the letters stand for?
N _____
R _____
P _____
- As gas and organic vapour filters are used, their ability to remove gases and vapours never decreases:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- A filter must be changed if:
 - It is damaged
 - It becomes difficult to breathe through
 - The replacement period is reached
 - All of the above
- Leave a contaminated area and change filters right away if you can smell or taste the contaminant through the filter:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- Workers are not required to have his/her own respirator:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____
- Store respirator in a dry location away from dust, chemicals, oil, and grease. Protect it from the sun, excessive heat and cold, and vermin:
TRUE _____ FALSE _____

ANSWERS:

1. TRUE; 2. TRUE; 3. TRUE; 4. N - not resistant to oil, R - resistant to oil, P - oil proof; 5. FALSE; 6. d; 7. TRUE; 8. FALSE; 9. TRUE