

A RESPIRATOR MUST FIT WELL TO PROTECT WELL

3 ALWAYS CHECK THE FACE SEAL

It is important to do a “user seal check” every time you put on a respirator. Getting into the habit is the best thing a wearer can do to ensure good protection.



Negative Seal Check

Negative Seal Check

- Cover the filters so that air cannot be drawn through them.
- Collapse the mask against your face by inhaling gently. Hold your breath for 10 seconds.
- If air leaks in and the mask reinflates, check the valves, adjust the straps and try again.
- If air does not leak in and the mask stays collapsed against your face, it has passed the negative face seal check.



Positive Seal Check

Positive Seal Check

- Cover the exhalation valve with the palm of your hand.
- Inflate the mask slightly by exhaling gently. Wait a few seconds.
- If air leaks out and the mask deflates, check the valves, adjust the straps and try again.
- If the face seal holds the air and the mask stays inflated, it has passed the positive face seal check.

A HALF-MASK RESPIRATOR DOES NOT ALWAYS PROVIDE ENOUGH PROTECTION

Half-mask respirators leak too much to protect against very high levels of lead. A half-mask offers good protection only if the amount of lead in the air around the worker is less than 500 micrograms per cubic meter of air (500 $\mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$).

To find out how much lead workers are exposed to, Cal/OSHA requires that employers do “personal air sampling.”

Note: Half-mask air-purifying respirators do not protect the wearer in areas where there is not enough oxygen.

General Industry

Until good local exhaust ventilation is installed, half-mask respirators generally provide enough protection for the following tasks:

- Automotive radiator repair
- Spraying lead glaze or paint
- Casting and machining lead-containing metals

Construction

According to Cal/OSHA, if you are working on surfaces coated with lead paint, half-mask respirators probably provide enough protection for the following tasks:

- Manual demolition
- Hand sanding and scraping
- Heat gun use
- HEPA vacuum-attached power sanding

For these tasks start with half-mask respirators, then do air sampling to make sure that the air levels are not above 500 $\mu\text{g}/\text{M}^3$. Start with a more protective respirator if you are doing work that creates more dust or fume such as power sanding, abrasive blasting, welding or torch cutting.



Personal air sampling is not difficult, but employers who have not done it before will need help. The Cal/OSHA Consultation Service and some workers' compensation insurance carriers will do free air sampling.

DON'T IGNORE MAINTENANCE—IT IS SIMPLE AND VERY IMPORTANT!

Respirators come with the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance and care. Here are a few tips:

- **Clean respirators at the end of the day.** Wash your hands first. Remove the filters and wipe clean if possible. Change the filters as soon as you notice it is slightly harder to breathe through them. The respirator mask should be washed with a mild detergent in warm water, and then rinsed well. If there is no water available, use disposable towelettes such as baby-wipes. Dry the respirator before storing it.
- **Store the respirator in a rigid plastic container.** Plastic containers commonly used for food left-overs are perfect for storing half-mask respirators. The filters should be stored in a resealable plastic bag and placed in the container.
- **Regularly inspect the respirator and replace worn or damaged parts.** The wearer or an assigned person should regularly inspect the respirator and replace worn or damaged parts. Replacement parts for half-mask respirators are inexpensive and should be stocked on-site.

MAKE SURE EMPLOYEES ARE TRAINED

Cal/OSHA requires that employers train employees in how respirators work, how to wear them, and how to take care of them.



Safety equipment suppliers carry training materials, including videos, that are available to help employers do this (see listing in the yellow pages). Some safety equipment suppliers can also arrange employee training for customers.

GET WITH THE PROGRAM!

Cal/OSHA requires employers to have a written respiratory protection program documenting their use of respirators.



A sample "fill in the blanks" written respiratory protection program is available at no cost from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Service.



CALL FOR HELP...

CAL/OSHA CONSULTATION SERVICE

The Consultation Service offers free health and safety assistance upon request. It does **not** enforce regulations or fine employers. It also does not share any information with Cal/OSHA enforcement.

Headquarters	(800) 963-9294
Local offices:	
Fresno	(559) 454-1295
Oakland	(510) 622-2891
Sacramento	(916) 263-0704
San Bernardino	(909) 383-4567
San Diego	(619) 767-2060
San Fernando Valley/Santa Barbara	(818) 901-5754
Santa Fe Springs	(562) 944-9366

SAFETY EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS

These are companies that specialize in supplying workplace safety products, including respirators and related supplies. Look for suppliers that carry a wide selection of respirator brands and sizes to choose from. Some will provide respirator training. Some sell fit testing kits, or will provide fit testing as a service to their customers.

Look under "Safety Equipment" in the yellow pages.

UNIVERSITY-BASED OCCUPATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH CLINICS

For service or referral to a doctor qualified in occupational health issues, these clinics are a good place to start.

Irvine	(949) 824-8641
Los Angeles	(310) 794-8144
Sacramento	(916) 734-3572
San Diego	(619) 294-6206
San Francisco	(415) 206-4320

OLPPP— The Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, California Department of Health Services

OLPPP provides free consultation and educational materials to employers and workers on workplace lead poisoning prevention. OLPPP does not enforce regulations or fine employers. OLPPP can provide copies of the relevant Cal/OSHA lead and respiratory protection standards. OLPPP produced this guide.

Contact OLPPP at (866) 627-1587 or visit www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp

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HALF-MASK
RESPIRATORS**
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