

Respirator User Information

Annual Activities

OSHA regulations state that all persons who are required to wear respirators in the course of their employment **MUST** receive

- annual refresher training
- annual fit testing

EH&S will contact respirator users when it is time to perform these two functions.

Also, be sure to report to EH&S whether any **physical or medical changes** have occurred since your initial medical approval to wear the respirator. For example, if you have developed breathing problems, heart conditions, or even if you have gained or lost 20 pounds or more.

Any of these conditions may require an additional medical evaluation.

Fit Testing

Every year, EH&S must perform a fit test to ensure that the respirator supplied to you is still fitting properly and offering the protection that you need. This process is simple and easy, and is performed when you receive your annual refresher training.

You will be in a plastic chamber (such as you see in the photo) with your respirator on. The tester will introduce a chemical test agent into the chamber to see whether you are able to detect it (you should **NOT!**) The test agent varies with the type of respirator cartridge you are wearing. While in the chamber, you will be asked to move your head, talk, and jog in place, to simulate the sorts of movement you may make while using the respirator, and to see whether you remain protected during these activities. It is essential that you leave the test with your respirator properly fitting.



Inspection and Care of Your Respirator

In nearly all cases at Carnegie Mellon, your respirator is yours exclusively, making it easier for you to maintain it properly.

Prior to *each* use, you **MUST** inspect the respirator to ensure that it is in good condition. Check the straps and rubber molding to ensure that are not damaged. Check the thin rubber seals behind the cartridges and exhalation port to be sure they move freely and are not damaged. Never use a respirator with damaged components. Contact EH&S if this occurs.

Prior to *each* use, you **MUST** perform a positive and negative leak check. To do this, fit your respirator to your face as you have been taught. With the fleshy parts of your palms, gently cover the inlet grooves of your respirator cartridges. Inhale normally. You should not feel any air leakage around the seal of the face-piece and the respirator should cave in slightly. Then, again with your palm, cover the exit port at the lower front of the respirator and exhale normally. You should again feel no air leaks and the face-piece should bulge out slightly. Both of these tests must be successful before you use the respirator. In the event of any problems, contact EH&S.



After you use your respirator, you should clean it with the cleaning pads provided for you and store it in the sealable bag also provided to you.

Use of Your Respirator

Remember it is critical that you use your respirator **ONLY** for the use that has been identified for you. The respirator system is designed for protection for only certain contaminants and certain contaminant levels. Use in other situation may NOT provide sufficient protection and may in fact cause more of a hazard, as you may **THINK** the respirator is protecting you when it is not!

Voluntary Respirator Use

There are a number of persons at Carnegie Mellon who have been supplied with respiratory protection on a VOLUNTARY basis. This means that there is no regulatory need for you to wear a respirator and that you have not been **required** to wear one in the course of your job. The item has been provided to you at your request to address low-level contaminant exposures that may be present in your work area.

If the item provided for you is a disposable face piece respirator (see photo), then you have only to be concerned with two things:

- Be aware that the face piece is only designed to protect you from particles and dust, NOT gases, organic vapors or any other hazardous situation. It does NOT supply oxygen!
- When you need additional face pieces, contact EH&S

If the item provided for you is a half mask respirator with interchangeable cartridges (see photo) you need to be aware of these items:

- You should have completed a medical questionnaire, through EH&S, before using the respirator. If your medical situation has changed, contact EH&S.
- You must be vigilant in ensuring that you use only the cartridges that have been supplied to you by EH&S for the respirator. EH&S will supply new cartridges for you if needed.
- Even though your use is voluntary, you must only use the respirator for the task(s) for which you have been given it. It does not supply oxygen!



Administration of the Respiratory Protection Program

OSHA requires Carnegie Mellon to do some additional things to ensure that all employees who wear respiratory protection are well protected. These are:

- Prepare a Written Respiratory Protection Program outlining the procedures we will be implementing to comply with the OSHA regulation. That document is available for you to read at: <http://ehs-alert.fms.bap.cmu.edu/pdf/RespProtPlan.pdf>.
- Identify a Respiratory Protection Officer who will oversee the Respiratory Protection Program. We have two here; they are Mark Banister markb2@andrew.cmu.edu and Andrew Lawson alawson@andrew.cmu.edu. Either person can be contacted at 8-8182.

Our Mission:

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is committed to providing health and safety services that protect the University community and the environment.