

Respiratory Protection

Additional Resources:

- [OSHA QuickCard™](#) *(No Spanish Available)*
- [Complete OSHA Standard](#)
- [FAQ](#)

1910.134 - made applicable to construction by 1926.103

In emergencies, or when feasible engineering or administrative controls are not effective in controlling toxic substances, appropriate respiratory protective equipment shall be provided by the employer and shall be used. 1910.134(a)(1) and (2)

Respirators shall be appropriate for the hazardous material involved and the extent and nature of the work requirements and conditions. 1910.134(d)(1)(i)

Respirators shall be approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. 1910.134(d)(1)(ii)

Respirator cartridges/canisters shall be equipped with an end-of-service life indicator certified by NIOSH for the contaminant, or the employer shall establish a change-out schedule based on objective data (e.g., air monitoring data) that will ensure the cartridges/ canisters are changed before the end of their service life. 1910.134(d)(3)(iii)(B)

Employees required to use respirators shall be thoroughly trained in their use. 1910.134(k)

Respirators shall be inspected regularly and maintained in good condition. 1910.134(h)

Medical Approval

Using a respirator may place a physiological burden on the user, depending on the physical conditions of the workplace, the type of respirator worn, and the condition of the employee. As a result, completion of a medical evaluation is required for individual use of all respirators except filtering facepieces (dust masks) prior to fitting or issuance, unless the filtering facepiece is "required" in which case the evaluation is also required.

The medical evaluation shall either be completed using the Medical Questionnaire provided in Appendix C of the standard or by an initial medical examination that obtains the same information as the questionnaire. The medical evaluation, including the questionnaire and any medical examinations, shall be administered confidentially during the employee's normal working hours or at a time and place convenient to the employee.

Fit Testing

Fit testing is a process of determining the effectiveness of the respirator seal on a user. Fit testing is required for employees wearing all types of cartridge, canister, or dust-filter respirators except for filtering facepieces (dust masks). Employees who are required to wear respirators with tight-fitting facepieces will be fit tested.

Before starting work requiring the use of a respirator; Annually thereafter; and when there are changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respirator fit such as obvious changes in body weight, facial scarring, extensive dental work, etc.

Employees will be fit-tested with the make, model and size respirator that they will actually be wearing.

More detailed information regarding fit testing procedures are included in the OSHA standard.

Voluntary Use

Employees may voluntarily wear respirators if they inform their employer of the use, it doesn't further add a safety hazard if they follow Appendix D of the standard, and they comply with the medical approval provisions, as applicable.

1910.134(c)(2)(i) and Appendix D