

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR AUTO BODY COLLISION SHOPS

Welcome!

This newsletter has been developed for auto body collision shops participating in the Collision Auto Repair Safety Study (CARSS). This issue covers proper respirator use and the related OSHA standard. Future issues will address other topics that will assist you in establishing an effective safety and health program.

Respirator use in your shop

Respirators prevent harmful chemicals from entering the body when you breathe. By wearing the right respirator correctly and consistently, you can prevent illnesses caused by isocyanates and solvents, and reduce your exposure to dust.

What is the difference between mandatory and "voluntary" use of respirators?

Mandatory use is when you require employees to use a respirator. Voluntary use is when an employee chooses to wear a respirator, even though it is not required by either you or by any OSHA standard.

The OSHA requirements for each type of use are shown in the table below.

	Required use	Voluntary use	
	all respirators	2-strap dust mask	other respirators
Medical evaluation	√		√
Fit test	√ (annual)		
Training	√ (annual)		
Appendix D		√	√

Medical evaluation

A confidential medical evaluation may consist of only a questionnaire (on-line or paper). In some cases, the employee may need to talk to or see a physician. Frequency of evaluation:

- before an employee uses a respirator
- when an employee's health status changes
- in the absence of a health change, Dr. David Parker, MD recommends an evaluation every 5 years.

CARSS provides **FREE** on-line medical evaluations, respirator training, and fit testing. Contact us for assistance.

Respirator fit test

An annual fit test is the only way to confirm that a respirator is creating a good seal with the user's face. The test can be done using a machine or substances that must be detected through taste. Either method requires the user to perform different exercises standardized by the OSHA protocol and takes about 10 minutes.

Training

Annual training must address the correct use and care of the respirator along with cartridge change schedule and symptoms of exposure to the chemicals you are protecting against.



Proper use of tight-fitting respirators:

- the respirator is the correct size
- nothing interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal (e.g. facial hair, safety glasses, jewelry)
- a seal-check is performed after putting the respirator on
- cartridges are changed on a set schedule

Respirator storage:

- in zip-locked bags or air-tight containers
- away from direct sunlight
- never place anything on top of the respirator - it could change its shape and alter the way the respirator fits

Cartridge change schedules

Knowing how often to change the cartridges is very important. An overused cartridge cannot trap the harmful vapors.

You cannot tell when the cartridges are “used up” based on smell alone; some chemicals (such as isocyanates) do not have a detectable odor. Ask your respirator distributor for a *written* recommendation and file it with your program (example: 3M Technical Bulletin # 158).

Make sure that all your employees know how often to change the cartridges or respirators.

Fresh air systems:

- Inline filters and sorbent beds must be maintained and replaced per manufacturer’s recommendations.
- The system must include a method to monitor carbon monoxide (CO).



Respirators & OSHA requirements

Use the checklist below to determine your compliance with the OSHA standard (1910.134):

- A written Respiratory Protection Program and a designated program administrator
- Written chemical cartridge change schedule
- Medical evaluation* records
- Fit test* records
- Training* records

* must be provided at no charge to employees

For a Respiratory Protection template, go to the CARSS website (www.repairsafety.com). Click on the “Programs and Policies” link on the left side of the screen.

Do you need help complying with the OSHA respirator standard? We can assist you!

Need extra copies of the newsletter for your employees? Please contact:

Anca Bejan (anca.bejan@parknicollet.com, 952-993-3287) or
Maryellen Skan (maryellen.skan@parknicollet.com, 952-993-3008)

REMEMBER – it is YOUR responsibility to make sure that respirators are worn when needed and worn correctly!