



Toolbox Talk

Respirators

Introduction: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Respirators

For many tasks PPE is your last line of defence against injury... or worse. Before starting any task, consider the implications if something goes wrong. If you are exposed to silica dust, the long term effects can be devastating. Imagine not being able to play with your children, or play your favourite sport because you can't catch a breath. Once you realise what you have to lose, you will remember to wear your PPE.

Requirements & Regulations:

- The above is true of all Personal Protection Equipment. And it's particularly important in relation to respirators.
- In addition to ensuring proper functioning and fit of respirators, you should always wear the right respirator for the risk you are exposed to. If you need a P3 level protection, then that means both the mask and the filter have to be right. A P3 filter in a P2 mask only protects you to a P2 level.
- Remember, use the right filter for your mask and the right mask for your task.
- Respirators used at work should comply with Australian standard AS/NZS 1716:2012 OR ISO 16900:2015. This number is usually displayed on the respirator or its packaging.

Good Practice

- ✔ In addition to ensuring the right mask, you should have it properly fitted by an expert the first time you use it and annually thereafter
- ✔ You can also perform a quick test yourself every time you use it either by covering the exhalation valves and breathing out, if no air escapes you have a good seal, or by covering the inhalation valves and breathing in, if no air leaks in then the seal is good.
- ✔ You should also visually inspect your PPE every time you use it.

Facepiece:

- ✔ Check for holes and tears
- ✔ Make sure the lenses are secure and not cracked or scratched
- ✔ Ensure the facepiece edges are not rippled or distorted

Check the head strap:

- ✔ Any cracks or breaks in the webbing, or is there any deterioration in the strap that could cause it to fail

Valves:

- ✔ Check that the valve seals are free from dust which may prevent a proper seal

Filters:

- ✔ Replace your filter regularly to ensure that it is working properly

Summary

- ✔ Always wear PPE where required
- ✔ Make sure it is the right type of PPE for your task
- ✔ Ensure it meets Australian legislation
- ✔ Make sure it fits and you know how to use it
- ✔ Check it regularly

