

news & notes

CHOOSE THE RIGHT RESPIRATOR

Here's a quick primer:

Air-purifying respirators protect against many contaminants by filtering or chemically "scrubbing" them and are used when:

- There is enough oxygen present.
- Contaminants can be filtered or "scrubbed" out.
- Contaminants are not at Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health (IDLH) levels.

These respirators have color-coded cartridges or canisters to indicate the type of contaminant they protect against. Remember that cartridges and canisters get used up. Know how to recognize their end of life, and replace them if you're not sure!

Air-supplying respirators have a separate source of air—either an air line or self-contained portable air supply—and are used when:

- There is not enough oxygen present.
- Contaminants are at Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health levels.

Follow these other respirator safety steps:

- Always use the respirator that is assigned to you
- If you're unsure what respirator to use:
 - Read your organization's written respiratory protection program.
 - Check the MSDS for the hazardous substance, and the respirator manufacturer's written instructions.
 - Ask a supervisor.



"Anyway...to make a lung story short..."



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Breathe Easy

This month consider these statistics:

- Lung disease is the number one work-related illness in the U.S. in terms of severity, frequency, and preventability.
- Occupational lung cancer is estimated to kill between 15,000 and 20,000 people each year.
- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women in the U.S.

Occupational lung disease can be a killer. Many serious—even fatal—lung diseases can be traced to workplace hazards, including:

- **Lung cancer**—from inhaling carcinogenic chemicals, asbestos, and certain types of carbons
- **Asbestosis**—a progressive lung disease that results from inhaling asbestos fibers
- **Silicosis**—from inhaling silica dust found in stone, clay, and glass manufacturing as well as blasting operations
- **Occupational asthma**—from exposure to any number of vapors, gases, fumes, or dusts that can trigger an asthma attack
- **Certain industry-specific diseases** such as black lung (coal) and brown lung (textiles)

In addition, studies clearly show that smokers are more susceptible than non-smokers to developing occupational lung diseases. At any rate, make it a habit to always:

- **Read the labels and MSDSs** of hazardous substances to understand the dangers of inhaling the substance—and do it before using the substance.
- **Avoid or minimize breathing in any sort of dust, vapors, fumes, or gases.**
- **Make sure that engineering controls, such as ventilation and exhaust systems, are in place** and functioning properly.

Anyone who works in an area with high levels of hazardous substances in the air must wear an appropriate respirator and know how to use it properly.

Early detection is the key to treating lung diseases. The success of medical treatment for lung diseases usually depends on how early the disease is detected. So get a medical examination if you develop symptoms, such as a persistent cough, and if you have reason to believe the problem may be work-related.

Safety Attitude Makes A Difference

Your safety attitude prevents injuries to you and to others. Wearing PPE is an example of how a safety attitude protects you. Telling others to wear PPE protects them. Cleaning up water or removing a trip hazard are also examples of how a safety attitude protects others.

Your safety attitude protects the company from fines. Any suggestions or actions such as housekeeping, following safe procedures, and keeping guards on machinery keeps the City in compliance with State (OSHA) regulations and keeps our employees safe.

A good safety attitude helps prepare for the unexpected. Those with safety attitudes know the location of fire extinguishers and evacuation exits and first-aid kits. They understand procedures for reporting fires, chemical spills, or other emergencies.

Employees with a safety attitude help improve the working environment and morale. Their safety suggestions make a safer and more efficient work area. Their attitude toward following safe procedures and wearing PPE encourages others to do the same. Their preparation for the unexpected helps ease the tension of others who may not be prepared for emergencies.

How's your Safety Attitude?



General Hazards

Safety is everybody's business, and our safety requires the active participation of management, supervisors, and workers, for no one group can do the job alone. Let's take a look at General Hazards.

There are two types of general hazards on the job:

Unsafe Acts

Unsafe Conditions

They are just what they sound like.

Unsafe acts are things people do that ignore safety procedures and risk their own, or other people's health and safety. They might include not wearing protecting clothing, mixing reactive chemicals, using a machine without a guard, or tossing sharp tools around the work area.

Unsafe conditions are machines, tools, protective equipment, or work area situations that don't comply with safety rules and practices and have to be fixed or corrected in order to protect the people who work here. Some examples are frayed electric cords, tools that spark, leaking chemical containers, and inadequate ventilation.

Now, let's identify some of the hazards. A key part of your safety responsibility is to know what constitutes a safety hazard. We want you to be on the lookout for safety hazards and to correct or report safety hazards immediately.

Training and safety meetings help you to know what constitutes a hazard. You can also get information from sources like labels and MSDS's.

A lot of hazard knowledge is the result of your experience, instinct, and common sense. If you see a tool that isn't working right, smell a peculiar odor, or notice materials piled up in a blind corner, you know it's a safety hazard even if it isn't something you've specifically covered in training or a safety meeting. The next section let's look at specific questions you can ask regarding hazards.

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Identifying Hazards

Questions to Ask:

- Is there a chance of a person, equipment, or materials getting caught in or between objects?
 - Is there a danger of falling, tripping, or slipping?
 - Is there a chance of being hit by or against an object?
 - Are there materials around that could burn or explode?
 - Are there materials that could create health hazards?
 - Are there unlabeled substances in the work area?
 - Is there danger of electrical overload?
- Are emergency exits blocked or is emergency equipment out of commission?

These are the kinds of questions you should be asking, in your head, all the time. And if the answers you get are answers that spell danger, you have to take the next step:

Either correct the problem, if you can, or report it to your supervisor so that it can be corrected.