



★★ RESPIRATORY PROTECTION ★★

OSHA estimates that over 5 million workers have at least some occasion to use respirators for protection against toxic substances or hazardous atmospheres. To address this statistic OSHA revised the original Respiratory Protection Standard to include all workplaces [general industry, construction, longshoring, shipyards, and marine terminals]. Once an employer determines the need for the use of respirators [review of Safety Data Sheets – SDS], requires the establishment and maintenance a written Respiratory Protection Program [RPP].

The “requirement” can be based on the following:

- Required by OSHA.
- Required by the employer as a condition of employment.
- Permitted by the employer at the request of the employee [voluntary use].

Basic Elements:

- **Respiratory Selection** – Based on respiratory hazards identified in the workplace, recommended by the SDS, or requested by the employee.
- **Employee Training** – Must cover;
 - Reasons for respirator use.
 - Importance of proper fit, use, maintenance, and storage
 - Procedures for malfunctions.
- Training must be repeated at least annually or when conditions change significantly.
- **Medical Evaluation** – Can be accomplished by confidential questionnaire, with a followup medical examination.
- **Fit Testing** – Only required when respirators are used in negative or positive pressure tight-fitting face piece.
- **Periodic Evaluation** – This is to ensure continuity and effectiveness of the program.
- **Record Keeping** – The following records must be maintained – medical examinations, fit testing (if required), training provided.