

# RESPIRATOR PRE-USE INSPECTION

RESPIRATORS ARE USED TO PROTECT WORKERS FROM GASES, VAPORS, DUSTS, FUMES, SMOKE, SPRAYS, AND OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS. SOME RESPIRATORY HAZARDS CAN TAKE YEARS TO MAKE YOU SICK, LIKE ASBESTOS WHICH CAN CAUSE LUNG CANCER EVEN DECADES AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED. TO ENSURE THAT YOUR RESPIRATOR IS PROTECTING YOU THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS THAT YOU NEED TO COMPLETE PRIOR TO USING YOUR RESPIRATOR.

- 1) SELECT THE CORRECT RESPIRATOR SIZE AND TYPE.
- 2) SELECT THE CORRECT CARTRIDGES FOR THE HAZARDOUS MATERIAL YOU ARE WORKING WITH.
- 3) CONDUCT A RESPIRATORY FIT TEST TO ENSURE THAT IT SEALS CORRECTLY.
- 4) PREVENTING INTERFERENCE WITH THE RESPIRATOR SEAL



**BC Forest Safety**

Safety is good business

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## **SELECTING A RESPIRATOR**

When selecting your respirator adjust the straps so that the respirator fits tightly but does not dig into your face or leave red marks on your skin. The respirator should feel snug but comfortable. Straps should be placed under a hard hat or hood.

## **SELECTING CARTRIDGES**

Select the correct cartridges for the hazards you are working with. Consult the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) or seek help from your supervisor if you are unsure of the correct cartridges to use.

## **CHECKING IF YOUR RESPIRATOR IS THE RIGHT FIT FOR YOU**

To protect yourself, your respirator must fit properly and form a good seal on your face. When it fits properly it will prevent contaminated air from leaking in past the sides, top, or bottom of the respirator and then being inhaled. A formal fit test is required to be completed annually by a trained fit tester.

## **CORRECTLY PUT ON YOUR RESPIRATOR**

Position the straps correctly, one above the ears and over the crown of the head, and the other below the ears and around the neck. If the respirator has adjustable straps, you can tighten or loosen them without removing the respirator.

## **CONDUCTING A SEAL CHECKING ON YOUR RESPIRATOR**

If you wear a respirator with a half-facepiece or full-facepiece, take the time to make sure your respirator fits properly and forms an effective seal with your face before each use. Conduct a seal check to ensure that there is a correct seal with the respirator to your face.

## **PREVENTING INTERFERENCE WITH THE RESPIRATOR SEAL**

Where your respirator seals with your face, nothing must come between the respirator and your skin. Eyeglass frames, head coverings, beards, sideburns, and stubble must not interfere with the seal. You must be clean-shaven where the respirator seals with your face. Some workers think the clean-shaven rule is too strict. "Does it really matter if there's a bit of stubble on my face?" The answer is yes. It matters a lot. Stubble prevents the mask from forming a good seal with the face. Stubble may seem small, but it is huge when you compare it with dust, mist, fibres, fume particles, and gas and vapour molecules. Stubble under the respirator seal creates plenty of room for contaminants to enter the mask.