



RESPIRATOR TRAINING PROGRAM

HALF MASK



WHAT IS A HALF MASK?

A half mask is a respirator that fits over your nose and mouth, providing breathing protection in a non-obstructive manner.

A half mask does not provide protection for your eyes or face.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The half mask body is made of soft elastomer material. It has a fitting for attaching filters or a supplied air connection. It also comprises an inhalation valve, one or two exhalation valves, and a head harness for holding the respirator securely against the face.

The sealing rim is designed to prevent air from leaking into the respirator. It is important to keep the rim clean and intact at all times.

The valves (also called membranes) ensure that the air is inhaled through the filter, and that no outside air leaks into the mask as you breathe.

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RESPIRATORS?

Respirators are made from different materials, depending on your work routines and comfort requirements.

Silicone masks are made for daily work or long-term wear, that is, in work places where you use the respirator for most of the time. They are very comfortable, and very soft against your face. In addition, a silicone respirator is largely non-allergenic and causes less perspiration along the sealing rim.

Other materials include TPE - Thermo-Plastic Elastomers; for people using masks infrequently (say, once a week) or for short periods of time. The TPE type is a heavy-duty respirator, but is intended for shorter term wear. Nevertheless, a TPE mask provides good protection and light weight.

Both the above types can be fitted with either gas or particle filters, as well as compressed air attachments. It is important to use the respirator that best suits your purposes and your work routines.

Another consideration is size. Although half face respirators are so soft and pliable that they will fit almost anybody, it is recommended to try on different size masks. Large-frame people may feel more comfortable - and achieve better protection - with a large size mask. Women workers may prefer a smaller size. The mask size may also influence the wear of other safety equipment, such as spectacles, goggles, ear muffs and face shields or visors.

WHERE CAN A HALF MASK BE USED?

Provided you are using the correct filter, combination filter, or supplied air attachment, a half mask can be used for:

- Nuisance dust
- Harmful dust
- Gas and vapour
- Viruses and bacteria
- Mould and fibre

Half masks should NOT be used in:

- oxygen-deficient areas
- atmospheres that can cause irritation or damage to the eyes

HOW TO FIT A HALF FACE RESPIRATOR:

- Sling the lower neck strap around your neck
- Start with the chin, then cup the mask up and around your mouth
- Hold the mask in position, pull the upper head harness around your head and fit it on the crest of your head
- Even out the tension of the head harness by hooking your fingers around the LOWER strap and pulling outwards a few times. This will increase the lift of the upper strap, supporting the weight of the filter/cartridge.

REMEMBER:

Never pull the head harness over a hard hat, ear muffs, goggles, cap or other head gear – the harness must be fitted DIRECTLY on your head

HOW TO CHECK FOR LEAKAGE:

- Fit a leakage testing disc or a plastic bag over the Filter and secure it with the pre-filter holder.
- Fit the respirator properly on your face.
- Breathe in and hold your breath.
- The mask should collapse against your face and stay in that position until you breathe out again.
- If the mask returns quickly to its normal shape, there may be a leakage problem. If so, repeat the leakage test. Should you still have a problem, see your supervisor.



HOW TO FIT A FILTER/CARTRIDGE:

- Make sure the filter/cartridge is turned the correct way (arrow pointing towards the respirator).
- Place the filter/cartridge inside the rubber fitting ring of the mask.
- Ensure that the flange of the filter/cartridge fits into the groove inside the rubber fitting.
- Run your finger between the filter/cartridge and the rubber rim until the filter flange is completely covered.
- To remove, peel back the rubber rim until the filter is free.

MASK MAINTENANCE

Only a CLEAN respirator can provide effective protection for your health. The mask should be cleaned and checked after each use - a simple procedure that takes only a minute.

Cleaning may be done with warm soapy water and a soft cloth, or by using Sundstrom's special sterilised hygienic cleaning tissues that keep your mask soft and flexible.

- Remove the filter/cartridge.
- Clean the outside of the respirator, checking for cracks and other damage.
- Pay special attention to the filter rim when cleaning.
- Wipe the inside of the mask.
- Clean the face sealing rim thoroughly.



- Clean any 'nooks and crannies' inside the mask.
- Remove the protective caps from the exhaust valves. Pull out the valves and wipe clean. Wipe the valve seats before refitting the valves and replacing the protective caps.
- Pull out the inhalation valve. Clean the valve and the valve seat. Replace. Make sure ALL valves are properly fitted.
- Put the respirator to your face and draw a few deep breaths to make sure that the valves are in good working order.



ONE USER— ONE MASK

Your mask is a personal item. Do not share masks with others, and always store your own respirator in a place where it can't be mixed up with other masks.

The best way to keep track of your own mask is to use masks fitted with bar-coded ID-tags. The ID-tag makes sure that your mask won't be mistaken for someone else's.



BEFORE FITTING THE RESPIRATOR:

- Make sure your face is clean shaven and washed.
- Check the mask for cracks and other defects.
- Ensure that the mask is clean and dry.
- Check that the filter/cartridge is properly fitted.
- Make sure that you are using the correct filter/cartridge.
- Perform a leakage test.

If you have problems...

Let your supervisor know **IMMEDIATELY** if:

- you experience any problems breathing through your respirator.
- you have troubles wearing the respirator together with other safety gear (hardhat, goggles, ear muffs etc.)
- you notice any damage to the mask.
- the leakage test doesn't work.
- you are unsure of use or maintenance of the respirator.

Always make sure that you know how to use your respirator and how to check that it is working. Remember why you are wearing respiratory protection: not just to comply with safety regulations... but to maintain a healthy body and a healthy life, both for you and your family and friends. After all, there IS life after work!

There is
LIFE
after
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