

# How to Properly Fit Check and Fit Test Your Respirator

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are available in Spanish at [gemplers.com](http://gemplers.com).

## **Key Points:**

- Respirators can protect you from chemicals and particles like dusts and mists.
- Check your respirator for the proper fit each time you put it on.
- Make sure there's a tight seal between your face and the facepiece at all times.

**Note to trainer:** Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold. Bring a variety of models and sizes of NIOSH approved respirators that meet your application needs.

## **Approved respirators prevent bodily harm**

- Respirators prevent harmful substances like dust, chemical gases, and chemical vapors from entering your body.
- Only filtered air can enter your lungs when a respirator fits properly.

## **Putting on a respirator**

**Note to trainer:** Demonstrate each of the following steps to trainees.

- Hold the respirator in your hands with the nosepiece facing up.
- Position the mask over your mouth and nose.
- With two strap respirators, pull one strap over the top of your head and place above your ears, and place the bottom strap below your ears. If there is only one strap, follow the product directions.
- Adjust the facepiece and straps until you have a comfortable fit.
- Check the written material that comes with your respirator for additional fitting instructions.

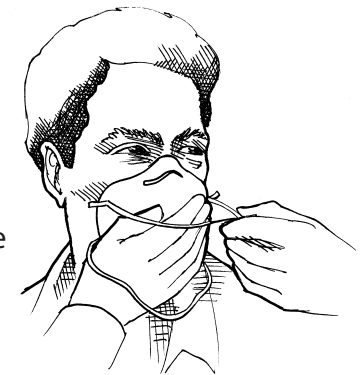
## **Fit checking your respirator**

- A fit check is a safety precaution that ensures all the air you breathe is flowing through the respirator and unfiltered air is not getting past.
- Perform a fit check every time you put on the respirator.
- Notify a supervisor if your respirator does not pass a fit check.

## **Performing a fit check**

**Note to trainer:** Demonstrate each of the following steps to trainees.

1. With your hand, cover the areas where air enters the mask.
2. Inhale slowly for a count of ten. Do not push on the mask.
3. Check to see if the facepiece pulls towards your face.  
No air should leak in between your face and facepiece.
4. Cover the area where air leaves the mask.
5. Exhale slowly for a count of ten. The facepiece should be bulging slightly.
6. Check again for leaks between your face and the facepiece of the respirator.
7. If you detect any leaks, readjust the straps and check again for a proper fit.



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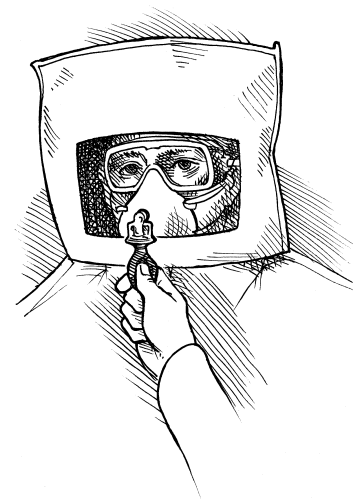
See our full line of safety supplies, including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

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## Qualitative fit testing

**Note to trainer:** Follow the manufacturer’s instructions found in the qualitative fit testing kit. Be sure your employee can smell or taste the test agent without wearing a respirator. With a beard or facial deformities, the person may be unable to pass a fit test. For these employees we recommend a powered air-purifying respirator. In some cases, quantitative fit testing will be required, consult your respirator supplier.

- Occasionally, we must perform a fit test to see which respirator fits you best.
- Fit tests must be performed annually and whenever a different respirator is used or when a facial change occurs such as scarring, dental change, cosmetic surgery or obvious weight change.
- You will be given a choice of different sizes and respirator models.
- Choose the model and size that gives you the appropriate seal after you correctly put on the respirator and perform a fit check.
- You will first have to detect the fit testing agent by smelling or tasting it without wearing a respirator.
- Disposable “dust/mist” respirator fit tests are done by squirting a sweet or bitter tasting agent in the air next to you. If you can taste the agent while wearing the respirator, you do not have a proper seal.
- Dual cartridge fit tests will find out if you can smell an agent such as smoke or banana oil. Again, if you can smell or taste the agent, you do not have a proper seal.
- During the fit test, you will be asked to perform certain exercises such as saying the alphabet or talking, moving your head from side to side and up and down, and marching in place while wearing the respirator.
- If at anytime you smell or taste the substance, notify the person doing the fit test.



## Are there any questions?

**Note to trainer:** Take time to answer trainees’ questions. Then review the Fit Checking and Fit Testing Do’s and Don’ts.

### FIT TESTING AND FIT CHECKING DO’S AND DON’TS

**DO:**

- Know that chemicals and dust can be dangerous if inhaled without a respirator.
- Fit check the respirator each time you put it on to make sure no air leaks between your face and the facepiece.
- Listen and follow instructions given by your supervisor during a fit test.

**DON’T:**

- Forget to adjust the facepiece and straps to form a tight seal between the respirator and your face.
- Go into a potentially hazardous area without first checking the respirator for the proper fit.
- Neglect to tell a supervisor if your respirator does not pass a fit check.

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