

Tight-Fitting Respirators — 6 Things Every User Must Do

A respirator only protects when it seals to the face. These 6 OSHA Respiratory Protection program requirements — medical clearance, fit test, clean shave, positive- and negative-pressure user seal checks, and pre-use inspection — are what make that seal real.

REQUIRED FIRST

01

Medical clearance — BEFORE fit test

A PLHCP must evaluate the user with the OSHA medical questionnaire (App C) or equivalent BEFORE any fit test or respirator use. Some users need follow-up exams. No clearance = no respirator. Reassess when conditions change.

§1910.134(e)(1)–(7), App C

02

Fit test — annually

Tight-fitting respirators (half-mask, full-face, filtering facepiece) require a qualitative or quantitative fit test before initial use, when a different facepiece is used, and at least annually. Document make, model, size, and result.

§1910.134(f)(1)–(8), App A

NO EXCEPTIONS

03

Clean shave at the seal

No facial hair (beard growth, stubble, sideburns) where the facepiece contacts the face. Hair breaks the seal regardless of fit-test result. Other conditions — facial features, dentures — that interfere with seal also disqualify use.

§1910.134(g)(1)(i)–(ii)

04

Positive-pressure seal check

Each time you put on a tight-fitting respirator: close off the exhalation valve and exhale gently. The facepiece should bulge slightly. If air escapes around the seal, reposition the respirator and check again until you get a positive seal.

§1910.134(g)(1)(iii), App B-1

05

Negative-pressure seal check

Cover the inhalation openings (cartridges or filters) with your palms and inhale gently. The facepiece should collapse slightly and stay collapsed for 10 seconds. If air leaks in, reposition and check again. Do BOTH checks every time.

§1910.134(g)(1)(iii), App B-1

06

Inspect, clean, store

Inspect facepiece, harness, valves, and cartridges before each use and during cleaning. Look for cracks, distortion, missing parts, and cartridge end-of-service indicators. Clean, disinfect, and store in a clean, dry, protected location.

§1910.134(h)(1)–(4), App B-2

Need PLHCP medical clearance, fit testing, or a written Respiratory Protection program for your worksite?

bluehive.com · 260-217-5328 ·
support@bluehive.com

Source: OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 — Respiratory Protection · App A (fit testing), App B-1 (user seal check), App B-2 (cleaning), App C (medical questionnaire)