Cleaning Reusable Respirators

The proper cleaning and maintenance of respirators is an important area that is commonly overlooked. All respiratory protection equipment needs to be in good condition to work effectively and to be able to supply the level of protection expected by the user.

Inspection of 3M™ Reusable Respirators is recommended before each use to ensure good operating condition. The facepiece must be repaired or replaced if there are damaged or defective parts. The following inspection procedure is suggested:

1. Check facepiece for cracks, tears and dirt. Be certain the facepiece, especially the faceseal area, is not distorted.
2. Examine inhalation valves for signs of distortion, cracking or tearing.
3. Make sure that head straps are intact and have good elasticity.
4. Examine all plastic parts for signs of cracking or fatiguing. Make sure filter gaskets or seal areas are in good condition.
5. Remove the exhalation valve cover and examine the exhalation valve and valve seat for signs of dirt, distortion, cracking or tearing. Replace exhalation valve cover.
6. Inspect the lens of full facepiece respirators for any damage that may impair its performance or vision.

Cleaning is recommended after each use. 3M™ Respirator Cleaning Wipes 504 may be used as an interim method in the cleaning schedule for individually assigned respirators, but this should not be the only method in place. During fit testing, these wipes may also be used to clean masks between employees being tested. However, respirators must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day, using these procedures:

1. Remove cartridges and filters.
2. Clean facepiece (excluding filters) by immersing in warm cleaning solution, the water temperature should not exceed 50º C, and scrub with soft brush until clean. Add neutral detergent if necessary. Do not use cleaners containing lanolin or other oils.
3. Disinfect the facepiece by soaking in a solution of quaternary ammonia disinfectant or dilute sodium hypochlorite (30 mL household bleach in 7.5 L of water), or another suitable disinfectant.
4. Rinse in fresh, warm water and air dry in a clean non-contaminated area.
5. Inspect the respirator components prior to reassembly. A respirator with any damaged or deteriorated components must be repaired or discarded.
6. Store the clean respirator away from contaminated areas when not in use.

NOTE: The above information is also outlined in the users instructions. Additionally, see specific product user instructions packaged with each respirator facepiece for additional information.

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