



Safety Tip of the Week

Respiratory Protective Equipment Storage

In many industrial workplaces, people must work in areas where different substances can be present, some hazardous to their health. There are facilities where the level of oxygen and the number of toxic substances could change at any time. These toxic substances could create health hazards that affect different parts of the body, causing disease, and in extreme cases, could even lead to death. When engineering controls are not feasible, or while they are being instituted, the Occupational Safety and Health Respiratory Standard 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1910.134 requires the use of respirators to protect employees from breathing contaminated and/or oxygen-deficient air. Respiratory protection devices are the last line of defense. Respiratory Protective Equipment is thus very important and must function properly when employees must use it.



Proper Way to Store a Routinely Used Respirator

Before storing your respirator, it must be cleaned and disinfected at specific intervals. When used exclusively by one employee, cleaning and disinfecting is as often as necessary to maintain sanitary condition. When used by more than one employee a respirator must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. You must store your respirators separate from cartridges/filters to protect them both from damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and damaging chemicals. Prevent your respirator facepieces from becoming distorted and the straps losing elasticity. DON'T hang them on a peg or object for a long time. Remember, storing the respirator in a plastic sealable bag after use is not considered a good practice. The respirator may be damp after use and sealing prevents drying and encourages microbial growth. If plastic bags are used, respirators must be allowed to dry before storage.

Summary:

We must remain vigilant and professional about our respiratory protection equipment. Improper care, maintenance, and storage could lead to failure of equipment and thus worse, personal injury or death. ALWAYS check for these problems before each use.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR RESPIRATOR...IT CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE!