



# Voluntary Use of Respirators

## Toolbox Talk Lesson Plan

Following best practices, the department has made N95 and other filtering face piece respirators available. Use of respirators is voluntary and is not required under OSHA standards. NJPEOSH requires the following information be provided to employees considering the voluntary use of a respirator:

- Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer on the use, maintenance, cleaning, and limitations of the respirator
- Use only NIOSH-certified filtering face piece respirators for the contaminant of concern.
  - Do not wear the respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, N95 respirators are designed for dust and non-oily mists and will not protect the wearer from smoke, gases, or oxygen-deficient atmospheres.
- Keep track of your respirator. Do not share respirators.

In addition:

- Respirators should be disposed of frequently. The frequency will depend on use.
- Respirators can place a physical demand on the wearer. If you have any concerns, talk to your physician.
- Talking and other head movements can limit the effectiveness of the respirator.

Appendix D is provided on the reverse side of this page. Please read and acknowledge by signing below. If you have further questions, please speak to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Be Safe

Employee Name	Signature	Employee Name	Signature

*This lesson plan is intended for general information purposes only. It should not be construed as legal advice or legal opinion regarding any specific or factual situation. Always follow your organization's policies and procedures as presented by your manager or supervisor. For further information regarding this bulletin, please contact your Safety Director at 877.398.3046.*

## **OSHA 1910.134 Appendix D (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard**

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.