

# TOOLBOX TALK #2

## RESPIRATOR SELECTION & USE



### OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S TALK



#### KNOW THE TYPES OF RESPIRATORS

Understand the type of respirator required for the job.



#### GETTING THE CORRECT FIT

Make sure your respirator fits properly to protect you.



#### PROTECTING YOUR LUNGS

Respirators help prevent long-term lung damage from harmful substances.



## REASON FOR THE TOOLBOX

Today, we're focusing on respirator selection and proper use. Wearing the right respirator is essential when dealing with hazardous dust, fumes, or vapours. If you don't wear the correct type, or if it doesn't fit properly, you're risking your health. By learning how to choose and use your RPE (Respiratory Protective Equipment), you'll stay safe and ensure you're properly protected from what you're exposed to on the job.

### 1. KNOW WHAT RPE YOU NEED TO WEAR

Not all respirators are the same, and they protect you from different hazards. Whether you're dealing with dust, fumes or vapours the type of respirator you need will depend on the risks around you. It's crucial to know the right equipment for the job. Wearing the wrong respirator can leave you exposed, so always check the requirements before starting work to make sure you're fully protected.

### 2. GETTING THE CORRECT 'FIT'

Even the best respirator won't protect you if it doesn't fit properly. When putting on your respirator, make sure it's sealed tightly against your face. Doing a quick fit check can help ensure no air or harmful substances get through. Remember, gaps mean exposure. If you feel air leaking in or your mask doesn't feel secure, adjust it or ask for help. A proper fit is the key to staying safe.



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## 3. IMPORTANCE OF BEING CLEAN SHAVEN

Facial hair can stop your respirator from sealing properly against your skin. If you've got a beard or stubble, the mask may not create a full seal, meaning harmful particles could get in. That's why being clean-shaven is a requirement when wearing tight-fitting respirators. It's a small step, but it can make a big difference in ensuring your lungs stay protected. If you do have facial hair that exceeds the sealable area then a PAPR or SCBA units must be worn as these are positive pressured and create a safer environment for workers.

## 4. LUNG HEALTH AND LAGGING INDICATORS

The damage caused by not having or misusing your RPE might not show up right away. Lung health issues, like those caused by dust and chemicals, often develop slowly over time, making it easy to ignore the risk. These are called lagging indicators – they can appear long after the exposure has happened. That's why it's so important to wear the correct RPE now, to prevent long-term health problems that could affect you down the track.

## 5. WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO PICK THE CORRECT RPE FOR THE JOB

Different jobs expose you to different hazards, so you need to select the correct RPE for what you're working with. Whether it's a half-mask, full-face respirator, PAPR or SCBA, the right choice depends on the type of risk. If you pick the wrong one, you could be putting your lung health on the line. Always double-check the working environmental and requirements to make sure you're using the right gear for the task.



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1300 HAYDEN



[enquiries@haydenhs.com.au](mailto:enquiries@haydenhs.com.au)