# **TOOLBOX SAFETY TALK**

### **EXPLAIN THE DANGER**

Not all hazards are created equally. Exposure to some substances can cause minor, short-lived effects while others can have fatal consequences. Know the hazards and the respiratory program for your work environment and what respiratory protective equipment you need.

## FIT TESTING RPE

Workers faces come in all shapes and sizes and so does RPE.

To ensure workers have a respirator that is the right size and fit, they must undergo a fit test. Regardless of the type of respirator selected, a proper facial seal is critical to ensure protection from the hazards. Workers must be both physically fit to wear a respirator and clean shaven in the area where the mask meets the skin.

Complete a fit test using an approved method.

- **Qualitative** method relies on a worker identifying a taste or smell of a specific material if there is not an effective facial seal or
- **Quantitative** method uses a *PortaCount* machine to measure particles both inside and outside the mask to ensure proper and effective maintenance of the facial seal.

Note that you must complete a fit test on each type, brand, or size of respirator a worker wears and repeat it if the RPE changes, or the shape of the worker's face changes (due to dental or facial surgery, significant weight loss or gain for example).

- It is recommended to complete a fit test each year but you must complete tests every 2 years at a minimum.
- Document these tests and maintain the file.

#### INSPECTION

Workers must inspect any RPE they use both before and after each use. Inspections are necessary to ensure all equipment is in good physical condition. Check for:

- Obvious deformities, damages, cracks, torn seals, broken straps, etc.
- Cartridges to ensure they are correct for the hazard, are built for use with the selected mask, and have not expired.
- Air supply systems, inspect the hose and end fitting attachments for breaks, cracks or kinks, check the tightness of the connection and ensure all valves, regulators, and other airflow devices are in proper working order.

Never use equipment that is not in proper working order. Repair it, test it for safety, or replace it.

#### PRE-USE SEAL CHECK

Prior to use, it is critical for a worker to confirm their respirator has a proper facial seal. Do this through a **Negative Pressure Check** and a **Positive Pressure Check**. If a Positive or Negative pressure check shows the seal is complete, reseat the respirator and try the process again until you achieve a proper seal, or remove the respirator from service.

#### CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Always refer to the manufacturer's specifications on how to properly clean and care for your RPE.

- Do not clean with solvents
- Wash with mild soap; rinse well; lay flat to dry.
- Store respirator in a clean plastic or self-sealing bag separate from the cartridges.
- Store cartridges in a clean plastic self-sealing bag.

See the Northwest Territories and <u>Nunavut's Codes</u> of <u>Practice</u> Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protection.