



The Importance of Comfort

Comfort is a key factor which influences the protection provided by your respirator. You must choose the most appropriate respirator for your working environment and the hazards within it as well as ensuring that the respirator fits you properly and is comfortable to wear.

It is vital to wear your respirator throughout the day, even short breaks can result in a significant decrease in the level of your protection.

It is the responsibility of manufacturers to ensure that respirators are comfortable enough to wear throughout a full working day.

You must be confident that your respirator fits correctly and comfortably. Tight fitting facepiece respirators require a fit test as per the COSHH Regs 2002.

Also, ensure that your respirator complies with the appropriate European Standard, is CEMarked and is suitable for the substances and the level of contamination that you are exposed to.

Improving Comfort

Comfort is defined by a combination of factors which are often particular to the individual, these include:

- Ease of Breathing
- Sweat and Heat Build Up
- Too much open space inside the respirator will retain your exhaled breath, making you feel hot. An effective exhalation valve will allow this warm air to escape easily.
- Avoid excessive pressure
- The respirator's edge should be flexible and the shape and size of the half mask should cover the nose, mouth and chin without causing pressure points.
- The straps must be the correct length, wide enough and positioned correctly to give a good fit without excessive pressure.
- To avoid itchiness the material in contact with the skin should be smooth and soft.
- Excessive weight will accelerate fatigue and necessitate higher pressure on the head from straps in order to maintain a good fit.
- If the respirator is too large or bulky, it may interfere with the field of vision of the wearer.

Choosing your respirator

It is important that you participate in the selection of your respirator to ensure that it suits your needs and those of your work environment:

- Many types of respirators seem similar but there are often significant differences in the use of materials, construction, design technology and durability.

- Workplace conditions such as temperature, humidity and work rate also affect wearer comfort and the importance of the different features that are available.
- A respirator must allow you the freedom to communicate easily with colleagues and also fit well with the rest of your safety equipment.
- Achieving a good fit is essential.
- A leaking respirator could be perceived as comfortable, but may be little better than using no respirator at all.

Choose a respirator that offers you the right level of both comfort and protection and ensure that you fit it correctly.



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