UK Standard Assigned Protection Factor 4 (APF 4)

Control approach R  Supplementary advice

You should use RPE:

- while you are planning to install engineering control;
- clearing up a spillage;
- maintenance;
- emergencies;
- cleaning, eg pressure washing;
- a short term one-off procedure; and
- whenever required for safe working.

Selection of RPE with an APF of 4 or more

RPE is designed to help protect workers from dusts, fumes, vapours or gases. This sheet describes respirators (including ‘dust masks’) that filter contaminated air. Fill in the selection table on page three and show it, with safety data sheets, to your RPE supplier.

Types of RPE available are:

- filtering half-mask, EN 149;
- filtering half-mask with valve, EN 405;
- filtering half-mask without inhalation valves EN 1827;
- half mask EN 140 and filter;
- full face mask EN136 and filter; and
- any of the above devices incorporating a low efficiency P1 particulate filter.

Caution: These are not suitable for use in confined spaces.

Planning and preparation

✓ Plan for and practice emergency procedures.
✓ Get up-to-date safety data sheets for all chemicals and products.
✓ Make sure you get initial fit testing done. Ask the supplier for help in fit testing and arranging training, or contact BOHS - see ‘Further information’.
Using RPE
✓ Wearers must be medically fit to wear RPE – seek medical advice if you are not sure.
✓ All types of RPE restrict what the wearer can do. It is uncomfortable to wear, particularly for long periods of time.
✓ The RPE has to be worn all the time, and until the wearer is away from the contaminated air.
✓ The RPE needs to fit the person. If the RPE depends on a face seal, it won’t work if the worker has face hair or stubble.
✓ Users should check the fit every time they put on RPE.
✓ Change the filters on respirators regularly – your supplier may be able to advise you.

Maintenance
✓ Keep RPE clean and in good working order – follow the manufacturers’ instructions.
✓ Maintain RPE at least once every three months. Replace valves, face seals and worn or damaged parts on respirators. The valves need changing frequently if substances such as paint sprays land on them.
✓ Store RPE in a safe place, away from contamination.
✓ Keep a small stock of replaceable parts.
✓ Remember to check the expiry dates on RPE and filters.

Caution: Make sure the correct filter is fitted.

Training
✓ Make sure that RPE users know how to check their equipment is working properly before they put it on, how to check face fit, how to replace worn or defective parts, and know about the RPE’s limitations.
✓ Instruct users to throw away disposable RPE after one use.
✓ Tell workers to stop work and leave the area if they think their RPE isn’t working properly.
✓ Your RPE supplier may be able to advise you on training.

Further Information
■ Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide
■ Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at www.bohs.org for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.
# Selection of RPE

Fill in the selection table below and show it, with safety data sheets, to your RPE supplier.

## Information to help your RPE supplier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task / Job name</th>
<th>Task / Job name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chemicals used</td>
<td>(Section 2 of safety data sheet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical form</td>
<td>Gas ☐ Mist ☐ Fume ☐ Vapour ☐ Dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a liquid, water or solvent based?</td>
<td>Water ☐ Solvent ☐ Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the humidity high?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How long does the task take?</td>
<td>___ hours ___ minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confined space?</td>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explosive / flammable in air</td>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work rate</td>
<td>Heavy ☐ Medium ☐ Light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space to do task</td>
<td>Restricted ☐ Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of moving around</td>
<td>One place ☐ Many places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision requirement</td>
<td>All round ☐ Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoken communication</td>
<td>Necessary ☐ Not relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearer's physical fitness</td>
<td>OK ☐ Not sure (ask a doctor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wearer's aspect</td>
<td>Face hair ☐ Spectacles ☐ Turban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other PPE worn?</td>
<td>Hard hat ☐ Ear muffs ☐ Visor ☐ Goggles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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