

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Respiratory protection should be provided by your employer to protect you from hazardous gases and vapors, oxygen deficiencies, and airborne particles wherever they may be present. If your employer [provides you with respirators](#), they must have a site-specific written respiratory protection program. This program should include:

- A respirator selection process
- Employee training records
- Employee medical evaluation reports
- Fit test results
- Filter change schedules
- Evaluations of hazardous atmospheres
- Program evaluations

Your employer must keep these records on file and available for employees, representatives, and inspectors to review upon request.

RESPIRATOR TYPES

There are [two major classes](#) of respirators. Air-purifying respirators remove contaminants from the air, while atmosphere-supplying respirators provide clean, breathable air from an uncontaminated air supply. Respirators can be either tight fitting or loose fitting. Tight fitting respirators include filtering facepieces, half masks and full facepieces that don't completely cover the head. Loose respirators are hoods or helmets that cover the head completely.

ATMOSPHERIC CONTAMINANTS

Respirators protect workers from a wide variety of hazardous environments. Respirators can enable employees to safely work around harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, fumes, gases, vapors, or sprays. Without proper respiratory protection, many airborne hazards could cause cancer, lung impairment, other diseases, and even death.

TRAINING

OSHA requires that all applicable employees be fully trained on respiratory protection before they begin work with their respirator. Before workers begin training, they must first pass a medical evaluation. Because respirators can make breathing difficult or induce feelings of claustrophobia, not everyone can wear a respirator. Respiratory impairment, cardiovascular impairment, anemia, epilepsy, punctured eardrums, diabetes, and vision problems can all prevent a worker from using a respirator.

After workers have passed their medical evaluations, they must be trained on the specific hazards that their respirator protects against and how to properly clean, maintain, and dispose of their respirator. Workers must be given a fit test to ensure that their respirator is the correct size and forms an adequate seal. They must also be trained on how to properly wear their respirator, including how to put it on, take it off, and check the fit. Employees must be retrained once per year, or if they show inadequate knowledge of any part of the respiratory protection program.

Validus is asking you to reach out to your employer and ask them to share with you the respiratory protection requirements of your company! Please feel free to share this Tailgate Talk with your employer. As a controlling employer, Validus Energy does not provide respiratory protection to non-employee contract workers.

Designing the best solution for respiratory protection:

- **Elimination:** remove the hazard
- **Substitution:** replace the hazard with a less dangerous substitute
- **Engineering Controls:** isolate people from the hazard
- **Administrative Controls:** change the way people work
- **PPE:** protect the worker with PPE

