

U.S. Fit Testing Policy for Tight Fitting Respirators

This Technical Data Bulletin supersedes and replaces TDB: OH&ESD #165– January, 2004

Policy

In the U.S., 3M will not perform fit testing of tight fitting respirators on users who have facial hair that protrudes beneath or under the respirator seal or interferes with the respirator valves' function. Additionally, 3M will not conduct respirator fit testing when any other condition exists that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal or valves' function.

A medical evaluation, to determine a worker's ability to use a tight-fitting respirator, must also be completed before being fit tested.

Discussion

The US OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard addresses the issue of respirator use and facial hair [29 CFR 1910.134(g)(1)(i)(A)]. This paragraph states that tight-fitting respirators are not permitted to be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face or that interferes with valve function. This paragraph includes any condition that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal or valve function [29 CFR 1910.134(g)(1)(i)(B)]. OSHA has provided additional guidance in Compliance Directive CPL 02-00-158, *Inspection Procedures for the Respiratory Protection Standard*. It defines the presence of facial hair to be "more than one day's growth." This implies the worker needs to have been clean shaven in the face seal area within the last 24 hours prior to the fit test. The list of other conditions that interfere with the face seal include facial scars, wearing of jewelry or the use of headgear that projects under the facepiece seal.

Therefore, 3M continues this policy of not conducting either qualitative or quantitative fit tests on workers with any facial hair that extends under the respirator seal or interferes with valve function.

These respirators should not be used on such workers.

Always read and follow *User Instructions*.

Personal Safety Division

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In United States of America

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