
The changes to the new version Standard are not fundamental – the basics of the 1994 version largely carry over to the 2009 version. The aim was to remove duplication and improve the flow and logic of the information provided.

There are no major changes to existing principles and selection framework – i.e. in general, a respirator suitable for use for an application under the 1994 framework is still suitable.

There is an expansion of information to help the reader understand the various aspects of respiratory protection. Changes and additions include:

- An expanded definitions section to improve clarity and understanding of the terms and descriptions in the standard.

- Information added on a Risk Assessment approach. This is to align with the accepted approach used for assessment of workplace hazards. To achieve this, the sequence of the text has been reordered.

- An increased emphasis on a complete Respiratory Protection Program approach – stressing that all the elements of a program must be delivered to achieve the respiratory protection that is required. It has been the aim of the Committee to stress that the provision of an item of respiratory protective equipment is only part of an overall system of respiratory protection for all employees.

- Expanded information on entry of contaminants into the body – including micro-organisms.

- Selection information now included for micro-organisms, radioactive materials and HAZMAT applications. These were absent or implied in the old version but made clearer and selection options provided.
2009 Australian Standard AS/NZS1715

- Existing Protection Factors are essentially unchanged.

- A section on strengths & limitations of different types of respirators. Readers who are new to respiratory protection are given relevant information to help them identify the types of equipment that may be suitable for their specific applications. Additional warnings about the possible misuse of respirators have also been included.

- An expanded Inspection, Cleaning and Maintenance information – more detail on how to do these effectively. They are crucial parts of a full Respiratory Protection Program.

- An increased emphasis on Fit Testing – it is clearly mandated that this is a necessary part of any program - Section 2.6 says "The program administrator shall ensure a suitable fit test is carried out for all users of RPE with a close fitting facepiece."

The specifics and details need to be read in full - a copy of the new AS/NZS1715:2009 standard can be purchased online at the website http://infostore.saiglobal.com/store/.

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