When not in use, respirators and cartridges need to be kept in a **sealed container** and stored in a **clean, dry, moderate temperature, and non-contaminated environment**. The ideal place to keep your respirator when not in use is in your **locker**. Respirators must be stored in a manner in which to protect them from damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and destructive chemicals. Respirators also need to be stored in a position that will prevent **deformation of the face piece and exhalation valve**. If the respirator is to be stored in a plastic bag, it must be **completely dry** before storing. Storing a damp respirator in a plastic bag encourages microbial growth creating problems for the wearer. The respirator should only be stored in a plastic bag when there is no locker available.

**How do I properly inspect my respirator?**

It is important to inspect your respirator **before and after each use**. Check your respirator for the following problems...

- **Face piece** → cracks, tears, holes, facemask distortion, and cracked or loose lens/face shield
- **Head straps** → breaks, tears, and bent or broken buckles
- **Valves** → residue or dirt, cracks or tears, and valves that may be stuck or folded open
- **Filters/Cartridges** → the NIOSH approval designation/label is clearly visible, inspect for gaskets, cracks, or dents in the housing, and the appropriate filter/cartridge is being used for the task

**Personal Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs)** → hose condition, gaskets, motor functioning, and battery charge

**Filter cartridge change schedule:**

- **Particulate Filter Cartridges** → employees using respirators with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters need to change their cartridges when they first begin to experience **increased breathing resistance** while wearing their respirator
- **Organic Vapor/Chemical Cartridges** → employees wearing respirators with organic vapor cartridges need to change their cartridges when they detect chemical odors while wearing their respirator

For more resources on the internet please refer to the following websites:

- **MSA**: http://www.msanet.com/response/chemicalsearch.asp
- **3M**: http://rsel.3m.com/rsel/genhazard.jsp

Questions regarding the content of this poster should be directed to the IH intern at 621-8763.

Reference: