Respiratator Maintenance

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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 clean and disinfect my respirator?

Disassemble the respirator and associated parts, including cartridges. Wipe the respirator and parts using an **alcohol-free cleaning cloth**. Rinse the respirator using **warm running water**. Allow the disassembled respirator to air dry in a **non-contaminated environment**. Reassemble the respirator and inspect that it is functioning properly prior to use.
Disassemble the respirator → Clean → Sanitize → Dry → Reassemble → Inspect

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

Reference:
U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *Respiratory Protection 1910.134 Regulations and Standards.*

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:

NIOSH Pocket Guide:
http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/npgname-a.html
MSA
http://www.msanet.com/response/chemicalsearch.asp
3M
http://rsel.3m.com/rsel/genhazard.jsp
Webwiser
http://webwiser.nlm.nih.gov