



The occupational hazard (tuberculosis) and the possible consequences of being exposed without respiratory protection:

- Microscopic organisms, which are airborne for long periods of time
- Spread by coughing, sneezing, breathing (not droplets)
- Enters through the lungs, however, can lodge in other organs
- Symptoms: weight loss, cough (not always bloody), night sweats
- Without proper protection you could contract tuberculosis

The respirator's (N-95) capabilities, limitations and possible malfunctions:

- Particulate respirator designed to filter out particles the size of tuberculosis. Good for dusty environments
- Not good for organic vapors, oxygen deficient atmosphere, acid environments or oily environments
- Poor fitting respirators (not snug) let in tuberculosis germs by pulling in air around face seal
- Damaged, wet respirators allow tuberculosis germs to get through the respirator material

How to inspect, and fit a respirator:

- Visually inspect for
 - Holes or tears
 - Worn areas or creases
 - Sturdy strap connection
 - Do not use if any concern about adequacy of respirator
- A good fit should cover from top of nose to under chin with room enough for the mouth to open, generously cover mouth from side to side when smiling and be reasonable comfortable. Points to check
 - Position of mask on nose
 - Room for eye protection or glasses
 - Room to talk
 - Position of mask on face and cheeks
 - Adequate strap tension

How to check the seals of the respirator (positive and negative pressure seal checks)

- Positive pressure user seal check – for respirators without valves:
 - Place both hands completely and lightly over respirator and inhale and exhale several times. The respirator should collapse slightly during inhalation and bulge/expand when you exhale. You should not feel any air leaking between your face and respirator. If you feel air leaks or the respirator does not collapse or bulge, work the straps back along the side of the head for a proper fit
 - Negative pressure user seal check – for respirators with valves
 - Place both hands on the respirator and inhale sharply. The respirator should collapse slightly. If air leaks at the edges, reposition it and readjust the nose clip for a more secure fit. Tighten straps if needed

Employee responsibilities

- Notify supervisor of facial changes that would affect the respirator's fit such as weight loss or gain, facial surgery, braces, or dentures, and beards or mustaches below the mouth
- Notify employee health of any permanent changes in your medical condition that would affect your abilities to wear a respirator, such as, asthma, chronic obstructive lung disease, chronic bronchitis, or heart conditions
- Contact employee health if you experience any difficulty in breathing, angina, chest pain, nausea or symptoms associated with heart or lung problems while wearing a respirator
- Every time a respirator is to be put on, inspect it prior to use and perform a user seal check
- Verify with supervisor where to find respirators and how to obtain a respirator of your size and make if it is not available
- Stay clean-shaven daily. Stubble will keep the respirator from sealing properly. If you decide to grow facial hair, you must inform your supervisor and contact clinical engineering (4-2391) for education on a PAPR (powered air purifying respirator) and equipment

Signature

Date

