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Weekly Safety Tip

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January 22, 2018

SCI Safety Tip: Do You Have Questions about Disposable Dust Masks? We Have Answers! (Part 1)

By: Rick Winship

Source: <http://www.ehstoday.com>

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Proper fit, training and evaluations are key to protecting employees from exposure to respirable hazards when using disposable dust masks/respirators.

The two most-common questions I hear when it comes to disposable dust masks/respirators are: “My employees wear disposable dust masks – do I have to fit test these employees?” and “How often should they change out their mask for a new one?”

First, it’s important to consider the masks themselves. These devices often are referred to as filtering facepieces and can be approved or unapproved. Unapproved dust masks can be mistaken for approved products.

So how can you tell the difference? An unapproved dust mask will not have a NIOSH stamp of approval on it. An approved filtering facepiece, such as an N95/P95/N100 particulate respirator, always will have a NIOSH stamp on it. Approved respirators must be used if a fit test is performed.

Do I have to fit test employees?

Voluntary-use masks – When the contaminant exposure does not exceed the OSHA PEL (permissible exposure limit), or the employer does not require the employees to wear a respirator (despite being

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underexposed), either an approved or unapproved dust mask can be made available to the employee, or they can use their own. This is referred to as voluntary use. Fit testing is not required for either product if it is voluntary use. (Refer to OSHA 29CFR1910.134 for additional information on voluntary use. For instance, the employer must provide employees with the information contained in Appendix D of OSHA 29CFR1910.134.)



Required-use masks – When the employer requires workers to wear approved dust masks to protect against contaminants, then all elements of the OSHA respiratory standard apply, including fit testing, medical evaluations, training and program evaluations. Approved protocols for fit testing are included in the standard. (Please refer to OSHA 29CFR1910.134 for details.)

When should employees get a new respirator?

When determining if employees need new respirators, remember the three D's:

- Dirty
- Damaged
- Difficult to breathe through

Dirty respirators – A respirator cannot have dirt or debris where it contact with the face. Dirt and debris not only affect the performance of the respirator; they also can expose the user directly to contaminants, particularly if the debris is contaminated or otherwise toxic. For example: An employee works in a dusty area. He takes his mask off and leaves it in the work area for the weekend. When he comes back, the inside of the mask has been exposed to contaminants for two days. It is very likely that the first breath he takes is contaminated.

Damaged respirators – If a strap or nose clip is broken then the product cannot properly seal on the face and cannot be used. It sounds simple, but I've seen respirators that looked like they were 10 years old. If your mask has an exhalation valve, make sure that it is free of debris and not damaged.

Difficult to breathe through – When a facepiece becomes difficult to breathe through or a worker feels a change in the resistance to take a breath, the respirator needs to be changed or throw out. Also, if an R (resistant-to-oil) filter is used in an oil mist environment, it only can be used for a single shift (or for 8 hours of continuous or intermittent use). For the use of P filters, when oil mist is present, consult the manufacturer of that particular filter for more information.

When R or P filters are used in non-oil mist environments, dirty/damaged/difficult to breathe through is the criteria for disposal.
Continued next week

SCI OSHA Compliance: Injury Tracking Application Electronic Submission of Injury and Illness Records to OSHA

Source: <http://www.osha.gov>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Employers can now begin to electronically report their Calendar Year (CY) 2017 Form 300A data to OSHA. All covered establishments must submit the information by July 1, 2018. Employers can view their submitted CY 2016 Form 300A summary information, but they cannot edit or submit additional 2016 data on this website. **Remember, not all establishments are covered by this requirement.** To review which establishments need to provide their 2017 data, [click here](#).

Covered establishments with 250 or more employees are only required to provide their 2017 Form 300A summary data. **OSHA is not accepting Form 300 and 301 information at this time.** OSHA announced that it will issue a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) to reconsider, revise, or remove provisions of the "Improve Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses" final rule, including the collection of the Forms 300/301 data. The Agency is currently drafting that NPRM and will seek comment on those provisions.



5 Habits That Help With Weight Loss

We all know to lose weight we need to eat lots of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lean protein and move more, right! Then why is it so hard...

The hardest part about losing weight isn't about knowing what to eat. The real challenge is changing your everyday habits to make healthy choices part of our routine. A recent Harvard Medical article states, "Paying attention to your eating habits and other lifestyle routines can help nudge down the number on the scale." By choosing not to reach for a bag of chips and soda from the vending machine or hit the drive thru on our way home, instead take time to plan and pack something a bit healthier. These changes can start small; make ONE change until that becomes a habit. **The journey to wellness starts with One Small Change!** This initiative from the American Heart Association is a great place to find an abundance of health & wellness information and help you make one small change to living healthier.

Below are five habits to help you on your weight loss journey. Dr. Blackburn, the director for the Center for Nutrition Medicine at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has advised overweight and obese people for more than four decades. Many of his patients have found adopting the below habits helpful when it comes to lasting weight loss.

1. Make time to prepare healthy meals
2. Slow down at meal time – eat mindfully – enjoy your food
3. Eat the same size meal for breakfast, lunch and dinner
4. Get enough sleep
5. Weigh yourself

Start today by making ONE small change that leads to a healthy habit for life!

Click on "Launch ITA" to provide OSHA your 2017 OSHA Form 300A information.

Who: Establishments with 250 or more employees that are currently required to keep OSHA injury and illness records, and establishments with 20-249 employees that are classified in [certain industries](#) with historically high rates of occupational injuries and illnesses. *Note that the following OSHA-approved State Plans have not yet adopted the requirement to submit injury and illness reports electronically:* CA, MD, MN, SC, UT, WA and WY. Establishments in these states are not currently required to submit their summary data through the ITA. Similarly, **state and local government establishments** in IL, ME, NJ, and NY are not currently required to submit their data through the ITA. Contact information for each of the State Plans can be found at <https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/states.html>.

What: Covered establishments must electronically submit information from their 2017 OSHA Form 300A.

When: In 2018, covered establishments must submit information from their completed 2017 Form 300A by July 1, 2018. Beginning in 2019 and every year thereafter, covered establishments must submit the information by March 2.

How: OSHA will provide a secure website that offers three options for data submission. First, users will be able to manually enter data into a web form. Second, users will be able to upload a CSV file to process single or multiple establishments at the same time. Last, users of automated recordkeeping systems will have the ability to transmit data electronically via an API (application programming interface). We will provide status updates and related information here as it becomes available.

We'd always like your feedback. Let us know what articles you'd like to see!

In Loving Memory...
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