

# Safe Properly Cleaning Respirators

Respirators play a crucial part when it comes to protecting employees from harmful air contaminants. With that said, it is important to properly clean the respirator after each use. Disinfecting wipes are a common cleaning method, but might not always effectively clean the respirator, so periodic thorough cleanings may be necessary.

## Step by Step: according to OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 (Appendix B-2)

- Remove filters, cartridges, or canisters along with disassembling the facepiece by removing speaking diaphragms, demand and pressure-demand valve assemblies, hoses, or any component recommended by the manufacturer. Discard or repair any defective parts.
- Wash components in warm (110°F maximum) water with a mild detergent or with a cleaner recommended by the manufacturer. Use a stiff bristle (not wire) brush to facilitate the removal of dirt.
- Rinse components thoroughly in clean, warm preferably running water.
- When the cleaner used does not contain a disinfecting agent, respirator components should be immersed for two minutes in one of the following:
  - Hypochlorite solution made by adding approximately one milliliter of laundry bleach to one liter of water at 110°F (1:10 ratio bleach to water); or,
  - Aqueous solution of iodine made by adding approximately 0.8 milliliters of tincture of iodine (6-8 grams ammonium and/or potassium iodide/100 cc of 45% alcohol) to one liter of water at 110°F; or,
  - Other commercially available cleansers of equivalent disinfectant quality when used as directed if their use is recommended or approved by the respirator manufacturer.
- Rinse components thoroughly in clean, warm, preferably running water. The importance of thorough rinsing cannot be overemphasized. Detergents or disinfectants that dry on facepieces may result in dermatitis. In addition, some disinfectants may cause deterioration of rubber or corrosion of metal parts if not completely removed.
- Components should be hand-dried with a clean lint-free cloth or air-dried.
- Reassemble facepiece, replacing filters, cartridges, and canisters where necessary.
- Test the respirator to ensure that all components work properly.

