



## Tool Box Talk – General Respiratory Protection

In the mechanical construction industry most of our respiratory hazards involve hot work fumes. It's rare that we need respiratory protection, but when we do, air purifying respirators are usually all that's needed. Here are some guidelines for using air purifying respirators:

- Never use a respirator until you have received proper training. Training covers your company's written respiratory protection program, including but not limited to hazard identification, respirator selection, fit testing, seal checks, use, maintenance and storage.
- Check with your supervisor about the hazardous substance exposure assessment. The assessment lets your company know what type of respirator you will need.
- Be prepared to go through a fit testing process. The process ensures that the respirator seals properly to your face. Make sure you are clean shaven wherever the respirator will contact your face.
- Inspect your respirator each time before using it. If you find any damage or defects, don't use it. Immediately follow your company's procedure for taking defective equipment out of service.
- Conduct a seal check each time before using your respirator. A seal check is a process to determine if the respirator is properly sealed to your face. You'll learn and practice the procedure in training.
- Replace the cartridges/filters as soon as you smell or taste any substance through the respirator.
- Air purifying respirator cartridges/filters used for gases and vapors should have end of service life (ESLI) indicators letting you know when to change them. When conditions don't allow for ESLI, a change schedule should be established.
- Be sure to keep your respirator clean, and keep it in a sealed bag or container when you're not using it. Store it in a cool, dry place.