

How to Properly Care for Your Respirator

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

- Keep your **respirator clean** and in good operating condition.
- Check for dirt, cracks, tears or other damage before and after each use.
- Disassemble your **respirator** before cleaning it.
- Store your **respirator** and **cartridges** in a cool, dry place away from chemicals and engine exhaust.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

Why take care of your **respirator**?

- Your **respirator** is an important piece of safety equipment. It helps protect you from breathing in harmful particles, gases and vapors.
- In order to be effective each time you use it, your **respirator** must be in good condition.

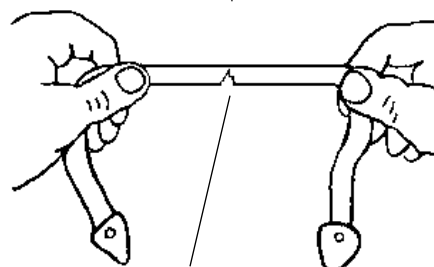
How to inspect your **respirator**

- Some **respirators** are disposable and can be thrown away after they are worn.
- Non-disposable **respirators** should be checked before and after each use. Here's how to do that:

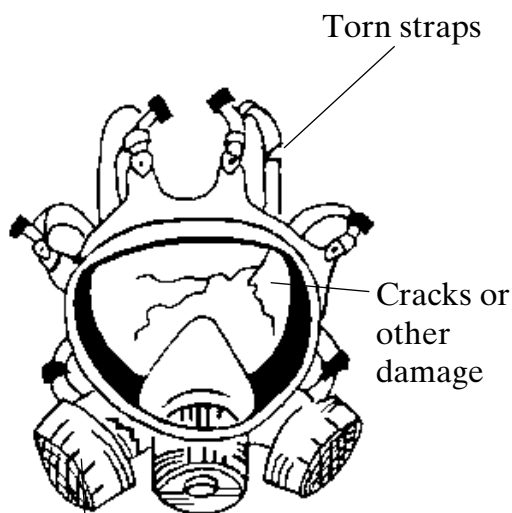
Note to trainer: Demonstrate each of the following steps to trainees.

1. Stretch the elastic on the straps. Be sure the elastic isn't becoming loose. Also check the straps for tears.
2. Check the lens for cracks or other damage.
3. Inspect the face seal. Make sure nothing interferes with the fittings. Check for dirt, cracks or tears.
4. When you perform fit checks on your **respirator**, you will be able to tell if the valves are working properly.
5. Look for any other worn, damaged or missing parts. If you spot a problem, get a different respirator. Report the problem to your supervisor so the respirator can be repaired.

Warning: **Cartridges** can break down and become ineffective with use. Leave the contaminated area you are in and change **cartridges** when you detect any tastes, odors or irritation, or your senses indicate any abnormal condition.



Tear in strap



Broken fittings

(Continued on back)

See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

How to Properly Care for Your Respirator

Cleaning your respirator

- Follow these steps to clean your non-disposable respirator:
 1. Wash your hands.
 2. Disassemble your respirator before cleaning it. Check the written instructions that come with the respirator.
 3. Hand wash the facepiece in warm water. Use a disinfecting soap recommended by the manufacturer. Then thoroughly rinse it off.
 4. Clean the inhalation and exhalation valves with the disinfecting soap.
 5. Cartridges and filters cannot be cleaned. they may be reused or disposed of, depending on their condition.
 6. Let all of the parts you have cleaned air dry before you put the respirator back together.
- You can use disposable wipe pads that do not contain alcohol to wipe off your respirator in between uses during the workday. The wipe pads come in small packets and can be taken with you where you work.



Where to store your respirator

- Storing a respirator on the dashboard of a truck, in an enclosed cab, on a work bench or near pesticide containers is dangerous. Cartridges can absorb anything from cigarette smoke to engine exhaust, and may not work the next time around.
- Dust, sunlight, humidity, extreme heat, extreme cold and chemicals may all damage your respirator.
- Be sure to store your respirator in a cool, dry place out of the sunlight.
- Cartridges should be removed from the respirator and stored in a standard zipper lock plastic bag.

Note to trainer: Tell trainees where to store their respirators.

- **Reminder:** Do not put anything on top of the respirator when you store it.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the **Proper Respirator Care Do's and Don'ts**.

PROPER <u>RESPIRATOR</u> CARE DO'S AND DON'TS	
<p>DO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take good care of your <u>respirator</u> by knowing how to inspect and <u>clean</u> it. • Use a different <u>respirator</u> if you spot any worn, damaged or missing parts. • Leave the contaminated area and change <u>cartridges</u> when you detect any odors or irritation. 	<p>DON'T:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle your <u>respirator</u> with dirty hands. • Forget to disassemble your <u>respirator</u> before you <u>clean</u> it. • Store <u>respirators</u> on the dashboard of a truck, in an enclosed cab, on a work bench or near pesticide containers.

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