Our Trainer Rey shows us Respirator Maintenance and Cleaning

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Posted by CSTC Staff 28 Mar 2019 09:00 AM

This time of the year, Pesticides and Respirators are popular trainings and topics of many questions. We had the chance to have Rey, one of CSTC's Trainers talk us through respirator take apart, cleaning, and even walk us through the proper way to put on and remove a respirator mask.

Transcription

— Hi, my name is Rey Maciel, trainer with California Safety and today we're going to be doing a respirator take apart and maintenance and cleaning as well.

— What type of Respirators do you have to show us?

— So right here, I have what is called a half face respirator. In this case, this one would be disposable because the cartridges cannot come off. I got a dust mist face respirator, which is, this one is completely disposable and I have a good example of a non NIOSH approved respirator and another half face respirator that is NIOSH approved.

— Complete Single Use Respirator

— So this one in itself, is a face respirator is complete and this one you can actually dispose of. So this one you can use on its own. This one's ready to use. This one has two straps, one goes underneath the ear, one goes above the ear. This one has a one-time use. That means, if you are using it with a pesticide and for whatever reason, it becomes wet or if it becomes difficult to breathe with, you have to throw it away. Also, let's say if you're working with it on one shift, once you're done with that shift, this has to go in the trash and you have to get another one. Any time that it does become to get too dirty, or if the inside were to become dirty or contaminated, you have to get a new one. And these have to be available, just in case you have a spill or something like that, you have to have multiple of these.

— Half Face Respirator

— This one is a full respirator. In this case, right now, it is complete, but this one consists of different parts. So if we take off the cover of the front, we have a particulate filter, that is much like this one. This one has the one that we have here, has a rating of P95. In this case, this pre-filter is a P95 as well. Underneath the pre-filter, we have the organic vapor cartridge. The organic vapor cartridge has a life cycle. So in this case like this one right here, this dust mask, is a one-time use only. The pre-filter is a one-time use only. That's why you can remove it easily, and go ahead and replace it. This right here, the brand that I have with me right now is a 3M. In the packaging of 3M, the recommendations from the manufacturer is that these have a life cycle of 30 days or 40 work hours, whichever comes first. Once that is up, then you have to get it replaced. The bad thing about this respirator is that it looks much like another half face respirator, bad part is, that you cannot remove the cartridges. Some 3Ms you can remove the cartridges, I just keep replacing new cartridges. In this case, this half face respirator has to be disposed of and you have to get a whole new assembly.

— How to Clean your Half Face Respirator

— When we have a half face respirator, we have to maintain it. This disposable one, once we're done using it, goes straight into the trash. This one, not necessarily. This one, how just because the cartridges are not removable, we can go ahead and use it again. What we do have to get rid of though, is the pre-filter. The pre-filter would go straight into the trash. And then, we can start disassembling this, to go ahead and start cleaning it. What we don't want to do, is we don't want to get the cartridges wet, because the activated charcoal inside of the cartridges is no longer going to be good. So, how we can start taking it apart, by taking off the top and bottom straps, can go ahead and take these off. This one is a little hard but we have to pull it up, and all the strap assembly comes apart. Once we take the strap assembly apart, we can take the exhaust valve off and this one can be washed with mild hand soap. With mild hand soap, we can go ahead and wash it and leave it to dry. Once we take off the exhaust valve, the intake valves are going to be located inside where the cartridges go in. And these we can take off by pinching them and pulling slightly, without ripping them and on the inside there's going to be two small diaphragms as well. Once we take off these diaphragms, those can be washed with mild soap and placed to dry. And the remaining respirator can be cleaned with like for example, a cloth, a clean cloth, and we can go ahead and wipe it down. On the respirator that we can take the cartridges off, we're going to wipe the outside of the cartridge and have it ready for the next day. And on that case, we would go ahead and wash this actual face piece with the mild soap as well, and place it to dry. My recommendation, is that we use that kind because then we can make sure that all the seals are really clean and we can cleaned it as best as we can. On this one since it's disposable, you're not going to have the best cleaning as possible, but we still need to take the time and clean it as much as we can. The inside is especially important. We do not want any contaminants inside, because that is where you're gonna be breathing. Around the seal, that goes around your face, which this is a bad example, because this respirator was left hanging, for example on a clothesline or something, and that face seal is not going to be good anymore. So we don't want to hang these from the face seal, but we do want to make sure that this gets cleaned really well, every time, so we don't have a rash on our face, or it starts itching itching when whoever it is we're using it. So cleanliness of this is really important, because it does go on your face and your face is very sensitive.

— Why should you be clean shaven when using a respirator?

— So, in order to be for these to be very effective, they need to make a seal around your face. In order to make a seal around your face, you have to be clean-shaven. Right now, I am NOT a good example but we want to be clean-shaven for when these go on your face, you can go ahead and tighten it to your fit and it becoming a seal. When we have a leak, especially when we breathe in, we're gonna be breathing in through the side of the face and not through the respirators themselves. So this face mask is not going to be filtering to its potential because you have a leak, so no leaks and with no contamination that is the goal.

— Putting the Respirator back together after cleaning

— Putting it back, putting it back together is simple. The exhaust valve, we just push it in. The inside valves are a little bit trickier, they have a three post system that you need to grab on one side and stretch it over and make sure that it lays flat completely. Because, if not, if these diaphragms are not sealed, then we're gonna have the air going and in the wrong way and we do not want that as well. We get new pre-filters, snap them back on. The letters on the pre-filter always go towards the facemask itself, so the clean white part always faces out. Another really cool thing that 3M has, is that whenever you could get a respirator and you open it from its sealed package, they come sealed, that they have a, obviously they have to have a color coded band around the cartridge itself, but 3M added a white box in the back. That white box, is so you can put a date of opening, so whenever you open the package, you write the date on there, so you know when those 30 days are up, or the 40 hours that you work with it so. Props to 3M for doing that and it helps you remember, when it is you need new respirators or cartridges. Go ahead and pop the front part back on, and that's good to go.

— What is the correct way to put on a Respirator Mask?

— A recommendation of putting on and taking off a mask. You always want to grab the bottom straps first. The bottom straps with the way they work, is that they just latch together. So, we're going to get the bottom straps, we're going to strap it to the bottom, to behind your neck. We're going to go ahead and grab the top strap and we're going to go ahead and put that on the top of our head. Make sure that the face mask is on your face well and you're creating a good seal.

— The Proper way to remove a Respirator Mask

— The proper procedure to taking off, is you want to take off the top strap first. You want to hold it out, and they made a latch on the back, so you can use one hand to take off the latch itself, while still holding the mask away from your head. And go ahead and leave the inside clean. Your main goal is to not contaminate the inside of the mask. Once we have that, we can go ahead and place it on a clean surface. Finish taking off our equipment, like a PPE, and then go ahead and clean the respirator every time you are done using it.

— What happens when you try to change the cartridge on a Disposable Respirator?

— Because some of them, they have so much use in them, that they are already more loose, this one's not, well, there we go. So this is a good example, of a respirator that you cannot change out. This one is, actually, I just broke it, because it is the disposable type and not the reusable type. When we have the reusable type, this can actually twist 90 degrees and you're going to be able to replace this cartridge, this cartridge. Whatever it depletes its life. This right here is the organic vapor cartridge. And this is what has a life in itself. This is the part itself that has the 30 days or 40 work hours, whichever comes first. So, in this case, this respirator is no longer good because it is the disposable type and cannot go back together. But 3M also has the face masks that come with replaceable cartridges.

— NIOSH Approved Respirators

— The face masks or the respirators that we use, have to be approved by NIOSH. This right here, is a 3M respirator and this one is approved by NIOSH. Like I said this is a good example of one that is not approved by NIOSH and we cannot use something that is not approved by NIOSH. Because then that is a risk to our safety.

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