

# NBSIA Member Services Safety Bulletin

October 2021

## RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard states when respirators are required in a workplace, they must be National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approved and employers must have a respiratory protection program that includes staff medical evaluations, fit testing, and training for employees as well as a hazard evaluation for proper respirator selection.

### Types of Respiratory Protection

There are two main types of respiratory protection—air-purifying respirators (APRs) and atmosphere-supplying respirators (ASRs). Each respirator type provides a different level of protection based on its design.

### Air-purifying respirators (APRs)

APRs use filters, cartridges, or canisters to remove gases, vapors, aerosols, or a combination of contaminants from the air. Tight-fitting APRs require fit testing prior to use. Below are the different types of APRs.

Different types of APRs:

- Filtering facepiece respirator (FFR)
- Elastomeric half mask respirator (EHMR)
- Elastomeric full facepiece respirator
- Powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR)

### Atmosphere-supplying respirators (ASRs)

ASRs provide clean breathing air from a separate source. These respirators protect workers from many types of airborne contaminants (particles, gases, and vapors) and, in certain cases, oxygen-deficient atmospheres. Tight-fitting ASRs require fit testing prior to use.

Different types of ASRs:

- Supplied-air respirator (SAR)
- Self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA)
- Combination supplied-air/self-contained breathing apparatus

### Respirator Fit Testing

A fit test is performed to confirm the fit of any respirator that forms a tight seal on the wearer's face. As part of the OSHA regulation 29 CFR 1910.134, fit testing is mandatory for all employees required to wear APRs and ASRs.

#### Places to Fit Test

##### NorthBay Occupational Health

2470 Hilborn Road, Suite 100, Fairfield  
707-646-4600

##### Kaiser On-the-Job Napa

3285 Claremont Way, 2nd floor, Napa  
707-258-4907

##### Kaiser On-the-Job Vallejo

975 Sereno Drive, Vallejo  
707-651-1370

\*Districts may need to establish account with facility prior to testing.

Sources:

[https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2021/09/09/respirator\\_roles/](https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2021/09/09/respirator_roles/)

[https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp\\_part/respsource2.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/respsource2.html)



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