



Controlling exposures to prevent occupational lung disease



Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) Guidance 2/5

2. Training

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Who needs training in RPE?

Those who will have to use the RPE, their supervisors and any other staff directly involved should receive information, instruction and training on RPE.

What should the training cover?

- Why is the RPE needed
- What are the on-site risks and hazards the RPE is being used to protect against
- The potential consequences of incorrect use
- How the RPE works and how it will provide protection

In addition, training will be required in the following key areas:

Fit Testing 	Use
Maintenance	Competency

Fit testing

When fit testing is required, all those involved should understand why fit testing is necessary and the benefits it provides.

This should include an explanation of the difference between a fit test and a pre-use seal check.



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Use

It is essential that those who will have to wear the RPE, and their supervisors, are adequately trained in:

- The right way to put on and remove the RPE
- The manufacturer's / supplier's pre-use instructions
- How to check that it is fitted correctly before entering the hazardous area
- How long it can be worn
- Examples of misuse that should be avoided

Users also need to understand that they will need to be clean shaven when using RPE that seals to the face. Otherwise, they will not achieve an effective seal and, therefore, will not be protected. The selection process should take into account any users who cannot be clean shaven. A 'tight fitting' respirator will not be suitable and they will have to use RPE with a loose seal, such as a powered air system incorporating a hood. See [RPE and facial hair fact sheet](#).



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Maintenance

Reusable RPE requires **maintenance, testing, cleaning and storage**; therefore, training should be provided to all those involved.

Reusable RPE requires cleaning and maintenance; therefore, a suitable area should be provided on the site for this to be done. You will find details about **maintenance, testing, cleaning and storage** in this [fact sheet](#). Users and maintenance operatives should be fully trained in what is required for each type and model of RPE that is to be used on site. Your supplier is likely to be the most competent professional to provide training.

Competency

Your RPE supplier should be able to provide information on the training required to use and maintain their products. In many cases it will be the supplier who is best placed to actually provide the training, but this must be relevant to the site where the RPE is used and the hazards and risks that are encountered.

The HSE requires that anybody selecting, using or maintaining RPE should be competent, and you should be able to demonstrate their competency by reference to your records of their appropriate training.