



# Customer Focus on Loss Control

*Innovative Safety and Health Solutions<sup>SM</sup>*

---

## Information for Workers Who Use Respirators on a Voluntary Basis (When Not Required Under the OSHA Standard)

When respirators are selected carefully and worn properly, they can be effective in protecting you against specific hazardous materials. Even when workers are not *required* to use respirators (that is, when the amount of potentially hazardous material is *below* the limits or levels set by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA), workers are still *encouraged* to use respirators, which can provide additional comfort and protection. However, if a worker uses a respirator improperly, or does not keep the respirator clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard. Workers may choose to wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazardous materials, even if the amount of hazardous substance present in the workplace does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator for voluntary use, you should take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

1. Choose a respirator which is specifically certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to protect against the contaminant to which you will be exposed. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. The label will tell you what the respirator is designed to do and how much it will protect you. If you do not understand the information completely, seek the advice of a qualified safety or health professional.
2. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on the proper use, maintenance, cleaning, and care of the respirator, as well as any warnings regarding the respirator's limitations. If you do not understand the information, seek the advice of a qualified safety or health professional.
3. Use the respirator appropriately, and use it only as it was designed to be used. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants against which your respirator is not designed to protect you. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Clean your respirator after each shift or after each use.
5. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

### Reference

OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134), Appendix D, "Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard (Mandatory)". U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 1998.

---

© 2002 The Hartford Loss Control Department All Rights Reserved.

CFLC 76 Information for Workers Who Use Respirators on a Voluntary Basis

*This document is provided for information purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for individual legal counsel or advice on issues discussed within. Readers seeking resolution of specific legal issues or business concerns related to the captioned topic should consult their attorneys and/or insurance representatives.*

*For more information, contact your local Hartford agent or your Hartford Loss Control Consultant.*

*Visit The Hartford's Loss Control web site at <http://www.thehartford.com/corporate/losscontrol/>*

