

Facepiece seal protection

[1910.134\(g\)\(1\)\(i\)](#)

The employer shall not permit respirators with tight-fitting facepieces to be worn by employees who have:

- Facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face or that interferes with valve function; or
- Any condition that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal or valve function.
- If an employee wears corrective glasses or goggles or other personal protective equipment, the employer shall ensure that such equipment is worn in a manner that does not interfere with the seal of the facepiece to the face of the user.
- For all tight-fitting respirators, the employer shall ensure that employees perform a user seal check each time they put on the respirator using the procedures in Appendix B-1 or procedures recommended by the respirator manufacturer that the employer demonstrates are as effective as those in Appendix B-1 of this section.
- The individual who uses a tight-fitting respirator is to perform a user seal check to ensure that an adequate seal is achieved each time the respirator is put on. Either the positive and negative pressure checks listed in this appendix, or the respirator manufacturer's recommended user seal check method shall be used. User seal checks are not substitutes for qualitative or quantitative fit tests.

Appendix B-1 - User Seal Check Procedures (Mandatory)

Facepiece Positive and/or Negative Pressure Checks

- **Positive pressure check.** Close off the exhalation valve and exhale gently into the facepiece. The face fit is considered satisfactory if a slight positive pressure can be built up inside the facepiece without any evidence of outward leakage of air at the seal. For most respirators this method of leak testing requires the wearer to first remove the exhalation valve cover before closing off the exhalation valve and then carefully replacing it after the test.
- **Negative pressure check.** Close off the inlet opening of the canister or cartridge(s) by covering with the palm of the hand(s) or by replacing the filter seal(s), inhale gently so that the facepiece collapses slightly, and hold the breath for ten seconds. The design of the inlet opening of some cartridges cannot be effectively covered with the palm of the hand. The test can be performed by covering the inlet opening of the cartridge with a thin latex or nitrile glove. If the facepiece remains in its slightly collapsed condition and no inward leakage of air is detected, the tightness of the respirator is considered satisfactory.
- **Manufacturer's Recommended User Seal Check Procedures**
- The respirator manufacturer's recommended procedures for performing a user seal check may be used instead of the positive and/or negative pressure check procedures provided that the employer demonstrates that the manufacturer's procedures are equally effective.