

Respirator User Seal Check

When using tight-fitting respirators, perform a user seal check to ensure an adequate seal is achieved each time the respirator is put on. Either positive- and negative-pressure checks or the respirator manufacturer's recommended user seal check method will be used:

A. Positive-pressure check:

- i. Close off the exhalation valve, and exhale gently into the facepiece.
- ii. 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.
- iii. 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.

B. Negative-pressure check:

- i. Close off the inlet opening of the canister or cartridge(s) by covering it with the palm of the hand(s) or replacing the filter seal(s), inhale gently so the facepiece collapses slightly, and hold your breath for ten seconds.
- ii. 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.
- iii. The design of the inlet opening of some cartridges cannot be effectively covered with the palm of the hand; in these instances, the test can be performed by covering the inlet opening of the cartridge with a thin latex or nitrile glove.

C. 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 it is demonstrated that the manufacturer's procedures are equally effective.

Note: User seal checks are not substitutes for qualitative or quantitative fit tests.

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