

TOOLBOX TALK #9

USING A DISPOSABLE RESPIRATOR

Although disposable respirators cannot completely protect a worker from inhaling airborne particles, they can reduce the number of particles inhaled. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) offers the following recommendations for using a disposable respirator:

- Wash your hands before putting on and taking off the respirator.
- If you have previously used a respirator model that fit you, use a respirator of the same make, model and size.
- Inspect the respirator for damage. If your respirator appears damaged, do not use it; instead, replace it with a new one.
- Do not allow hair, facial hair, jewelry, glasses or clothing to prevent proper placement of the respirator.
- Position the respirator in your hands with the nosepiece at your fingertips.
- Cup the respirator in your hand, allowing the headbands to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator under your chin with the nosepiece up.
- The top strap on single- or double-strap respirators goes over and rests at the top back of your head. The bottom strap should be positioned around the neck and below the ears. Do not crisscross straps.
- Placing both hands over the respirator, take a quick breath to check whether the respirator seals tightly to the face. Then, place both hands completely over the respirator and exhale. If you feel leakage, there is not a proper seal. If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nosepiece. If air leaks at the mask edges, readjust the straps along the sides of your head until a proper seal is achieved.

