

MOLDEX RESPIRATORY FAQs

1. What are the regulatory agencies involved with respiratory protection?

The [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) is the agency that enforces health and safety regulations in the workplace. In this situation, OSHA determines the appropriate respiratory protection for specific hazards and enforces its use. [NIOSH](#) regulates the manufacture and testing of respirators, but does not control their use. OSHA only allows the use of NIOSH certified respirators.

2. Which respirators should be used for protection against TB?

The minimum acceptable class of [respirator](#) for protection against TB is N95. Depending on the actual exposure conditions, higher classes of respirator may be appropriate, e.g. N99 or N100. Each healthcare situation must be evaluated by a health professional. You may also want to refer to NIOSH's publication entitled [Protect Yourself Against Tuberculosis- A Respiratory Protection Guide for Health Care Workers \(publication # 96-102\)](#) and [TB Respiratory Protection Program In Health Care Facilities: Administrator's Guide.](#)

Also, refer to:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/>
- [Tuberculosis Tech Brief](#)
- [Disposable Respirators](#)

3. Do Moldex® [Particulate Respirators](#) contain latex?

The cloth straps on our HandyStrap® Series respirators as well as the adjustable strap and [EZ-ON](#)® respirators contain latex. All our other models (2200, 2300, 2400, 2500, 2310) also contain latex. Persons highly sensitive to natural rubber latex may have an allergic reaction.

1500N95 series, 2200GN95 series and 1700N95 series **do not** contain latex.

4. What is a fit test?

[Fit testing](#) is a way of ensuring that a respirator fits each individual wearer. Fit testing requires a subject to wear a respirator and another person to administer the test. There are two types of fit tests, quantitative and qualitative. A qualitative test is a pass/fail test that relies on the individual's response to the test agent such as isoamyl acetate (banana oil), irritant smoke, saccharin or [Bitter](#). Quantitative fit tests assess the adequacy of respirator fit by numerically measuring the amount of leakage into the respirator. This test requires sophisticated monitoring instruments.

[OSHA Fit Testing Procedures \(Mandatory\) – 1910.134 App A:](#)

5. Is a user seal check the same as a fit test?

A user seal check is not the same as a fit test. It is used to determine if the respirator has correctly sealed before a contaminated work area is entered. It does not take the place of a fit test (which is a method that can be used to select the right size of respirator for the user or determine the adequacy of fit). A user seal check is required each time the respirator is donned whereas a fit test is required at least annually.

[OSHA User Seal Check Procedures \(Mandatory\) – 1910.134 App B-1](#)

6. How is a user seal check performed?

A user seal check should be performed by the wearer prior to entering a contaminated area. For disposable respirators, the subject cups both hands over the front of the respirator and then inhales sharply. A negative pressure should be felt inside the respirator. If any leakage is detected at respirator edges, straps should be adjusted by pulling them back along the sides and/or repositioning the respirator. For a reusable elastomeric facepiece, the cartridges are covered by the hands and the subject gently inhales and holds his breath. The facepiece should slightly collapse. If air leakage is detected, readjustment of the mask and/or straps is required. The user seal check should be repeated until the respirator seals to the face. If the proper fit cannot be obtained, the wearer should not enter the contaminated area and should contact their supervisor. [Moldex® Fitting Instructions](#)

7. How is a qualitative fit test conducted?

A test administrator challenges a subject wearing a respirator with a test aerosol. The subject dons the respirator and a fit test hood. The test aerosol (such as saccharin or [Bitter](#)) is sprayed inside the hood while the subject performs prescribed exercises. If the subject can taste the test agent, the respirator fails the test and another respirator must be tested. Prior to conducting the test, the administrator must determine if the subject can detect the test agent. If the subject can't detect the test agent, another one that can be detected must be used. The fit test procedure requires about 15 to 20 minutes.

[Fit Testing Videos](#)

[Moldex® Qualitative Fit Test Instructions](#)

8. What is a “qualitative” fit test?

A qualitative fit test is a pass/fail test that relies on the employee's response to a test agent. If the employee tastes the test agent, the test is failed. The OSHA protocols include saccharin, isoamyl acetate (banana oil), [Bitter](#) and irritant smoke. [Fit Testing Video](#)
[OSHA Fit Testing Procedures \(Mandatory\) – 1910.134 App A](#)

9. What else does OSHA require?

OSHA requires all employers, providing respirators to their employees, to have a comprehensive respirator protection program in place. This includes, but is not limited to, written standard operating procedures, training, medical surveillance and fit testing. For more information, refer to [29 CFR 1910.134](#) or call the Moldex® Technical Services Dept. for assistance in setting up a [respiratory protection program](#). [Fit Testing Video](#)

10. What maintenance and care is required for respirators?

The employer must provide for the cleaning and disinfecting, storage, inspection and repair of respirators used by employees according to the procedures in [29CFR1910.134](#).

11. How long can a particulate respirator be used before it must be discarded?

Respirator filters, whether disposable or reusable, in some cases can be used for extended periods of time. In other cases, they must be discarded at the end of each shift or sooner. You should always refer to the time use restrictions specified by the manufacturer or regulation. All filters must be replaced whenever they are damaged, soiled, or causing noticeably increased breathing resistance (i.e., causing discomfort to the wearer). Before each use, the outside of the filter material should be inspected. If the filter material is physically damaged or soiled, the filter should be discarded. Employers must develop standard operating procedures for storing, reusing respirators or disposing of respirators that have been designated as disposable.

12. If employees have a beard or moustache, is their respirator still effective?

Tight-fitting facepiece respirators which include filtering facepieces such as Moldex® must not be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face. Respirators that do not rely on a tight face seal, such as hoods or helmets, may be used by bearded individuals. Always refer to your employer's respiratory protection program policy. Additional Information: [OSHA link](#).

13. What type of respirator should I use for welding?

There are so many different types of welding environments and applications to consider. But in general, in non-confined spaces, areas free of oil and where a substance specific standard does not exist, any of the Moldex® N Class respirators could possibly be used such as the 2300N95 Series, 2700N95 Series, 2310N99 and 2315N99. Where nuisance levels of either ozone or organic vapors below the OSHA PEL might be present, the Moldex® 2400N95, or 2800N95 is suggested. In areas with oil, the Moldex® 2740R95 may be used. Also wear appropriate eye and face protection. SEE Moldex® TECH BRIEF: [Welding Fumes](#) and for more detailed information.

14. What type of respirator should I use for silica? Sandblasting?

You **CANNOT** use any Moldex® product for sandblasting. Where exposure to silica occurs other than sandblasting, Moldex® respirators can be considered. There are different classes

of silica with different TLV's or PEL's. Refer to the latest Moldex® [Chemical Selection Guide](#) for more information on a respirator recommendation. TECH BRIEF: [Silica](#)

15. What can I use for isocyanates?

You **CANNOT** use any Moldex® respirator for exposures to isocyanates. Refer to Moldex® Tech Brief: [Isocyanates](#).

16. Can I use another brand of [cartridge](#) or filter on your 7000, 7800, 8000 OR 9000 Series reusable respirators?

NO, you cannot interchange parts from different brands of respirators or substitute any other parts from another respirator manufacturer. Refer to the actual respirator instruction manual and or respirator user guide for more details.

17. Can I use your industrial respirators for a hospital environment with exposures to TB?

YES, however all our industrial respirators do contain materials with natural rubber or latex. Please refer to our [N95 Healthcare Particulate Respirators & Surgical Masks](#) that are specifically manufactured for healthcare settings and do not contain latex.

18. Can I modify the respirator for a more comfortable fit?

NO! Do not modify or alter any respirator. See your supervisor and do not enter the area if you can not obtain a good or comfortable fit.

19. Can Moldex®'s "How to Set Up A Respiratory Program" be used for setting up a program using other brands of respirators?

The program contains specifics about Moldex® respirators, but the actual program can be used to write a program for customers that use other brands of respirators.

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20. When should you change the N95 Healthcare Respirator?

When the user comes into any contact with bodily fluids, saliva or blood change the respirator immediately. You must also follow the policy of your infection control department.

21. What respirator does Moldex® recommend for mold spores?

There is no PEL for mold spores. Contact your local health department for a recommendation. SEE Moldex® TECH BRIEF: [Mold](#) for more detailed information.

22. Can I still use irritant smoke to fit test Moldex® half face respirators?

Although Irritant Smoke (Stannic Chloride) is an OSHA accepted method of fit-testing, we recommend that you consider using Bitter (Denatonium Benzoate) as your qualitative form of fit-testing. Moldex® does offer a Bitter Qualitative Fit Test Kit, part #0102, please refer to our website link below.

Also, referenced in the NIOSH Respirator Selection Logic 2004 (DHHS-NIOSH Publication No. 2005-1000);

“NIOSH endorses all provisions of OSHA’s 29 CFR Part 1910.134, as published on January 8, 1998, except that NIOSH does not recommend (a) the use of irritant smoke for qualitative respirator fit testing...”

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2005-100/pdfs/2005-100.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH PUB2005100>

Moldex® Bitter Qualitative Fit Test Kit:

<https://www.moldex.com/respiratory-protection/accessories/fool-was-licking-his-fingers-and-eating-grapes-out-of-the-bag...-for-someone-else-to-grab-fit-test-kit.php>

23. What respirator does Moldex® recommend for cigarette smoke?

Moldex® **DOES NOT** have a recommendation for cigarette smoke.

24. Is the 2200N95 Series rated for TB?

YES, The CDC’s minimum required for respiratory protection is any respirator certified under 42 CFR 84. However, most of our industrial respirators do contain materials with rubber or latex. Please review the links below on our N95 [Healthcare Particulate Respirators](#) & Surgical Masks that are specifically manufactured for healthcare settings and do not contain latex.

Also, refer to:

[Disposable Respirators for Healthcare](#)

25. Of what material is the 8000 facepiece made?

It is made from thermal plastic elastomer. The 8000 Facepiece contains latex (the exhalation and inhalation valve and the straps contain latex).

26. How can I tell if my respirator is certified under new regulations?

The TC# should start with TC-84A_____. Although some chemical gas/vapor cartridges still have a TC-23C approval number which are approved under 42CFR84, you may also search the approval on the [NIOSH Certified Equipment List](#).

27. What is “quantitative” fit test?

A quantitative fit test measures the adequacy of a respirator’s fit by numerically measuring the amount of leakage into the respirator. The [OSHA protocols](#) include use of a PortaCount®, CNC or CNP test. [See the Moldex® PortaCount® Loan Program](#).

28. If the exposure level to a contaminant is under the OSHA PEL, can I allow my employees to use a Moldex® disposable filtering facepiece such as the 2300N95 or 2700N95?

Yes, an employer can provide respirators for voluntary use. You should refer to OSHA’s Respiratory Protection standard for further details. References to voluntary use can be found in [29CFR1910.134](#) (c)(2) and in Appendix D to the standard. Additional Information: [OSHA link](#).

29. Why does Moldex® have “Use By/Expiration Dates” on your respiratory protection products?

All Moldex® respiratory protection products have “Use By” or “Expiration Dates” on them. These dates are placed on the product packaging as they are manufactured. This is intended to assist our customers who use and sell our products to deplete older inventory first and to protect users where the performance of the product may have been affected by unknown storage conditions. If this date is passed, or the product packaging is not intact, we recommend that the product **NOT** be sold or used.

30. Are the Moldex® Standard Strap respirators, such as the #2200N95 or #1500N95 adjustable?

No, they are not designed to be adjustable, you should not attempt to pull the strap through the staple to adjust the tension, this may result in breakage of the strap and could result in an inconsistent fit when donning one mask to another.

We do manufacture a line of disposable respirators that are designed with an adjustable strap, please refer to the following link:

<https://www.moldex.com/product/4600/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product/4800/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product/ez22/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product/ez23/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product/2315/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product/4700/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product/4300/>

<https://www.moldex.com/product-category/respiratory-protection/disposable-respirators/p100/>

31. Can I use your Moldex® Industrial Respirator for Volatile Organic Vapors (VOC's) exposure?

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are compounds that easily become vapors or gases and evaporate into the air. VOCs are released from burning fuel such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, or commonly used consumer products. VOCs combine with nitrogen oxides from vehicle exhaust and can form smog. The list below are common products that may have the potential to release VOC's:

- Solvents
- Paints and thinners
- Adhesives
- Dry cleaning fluids
- Glues
- Wood preservatives
- Cleaners
- Building materials and furnishings

There are also many other chemicals used in industry which are VOCs.

This category also includes many specific toxic substances, such as benzene, butadiene, hexane, toluene, xylene, and others. When the substance exceeds the Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) set by OSHA 29CFR 1910.1000 or any other state, local or government regulations then a NIOSH certified respirator with organic vapor capabilities may be advisable. In such cases it is the employer's responsibility to perform air samples to determine the appropriate level of protection (i.e. half mask, full face, PAPR, or supplied air respirators). They must then ensure that a cartridge can adequately remove the contaminant and develop a change out schedule. When a respirator is required by the employer the wearer must be part of a comprehensive respiratory protection program in

accordance with 29CFR1910.134 including, but not limited to proper training, fit testing, medical evaluation and maintenance.

OSHA PEL Annotated Table 1 lists some common VOCs, their Lower Explosion Limit (LEL) concentration, flashpoint temperature, and their exposure limits per the OSHA PEL, Cal OSHA PELs and other recommended limits.

When the exposure concentrations are below the PEL for a VOC then a nuisance organic vapor disposable type respirator may be used.

When using a Moldex product you must also refer to the Moldex Chemical Selection Guide to be determine if we suggest any of our respirators for the VOC in question.

Moldex Possible Solutions:

Reusable Respirators:

<https://www.moldex.com/product-category/respiratory-protection/reusable-respiratory-protection/>

Disposable Respirators:

<https://www.moldex.com/product-category/respiratory-protection/disposable-respirators/>

Ref: <https://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/chemicals-and-contaminants/volatile-organic-compounds-vocs>

OSHA Permissible Exposure Limits – Annotated
Tables: <https://www.osha.gov/dsq/annotated-pels/>

Change out schedules:

https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/respirator_selection_advisor/genius.html

NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/>

OSHA Occupational Chemical Database: <https://www.osha.gov/chemicaldata/>