

# PRODUCT SELECTION GUIDE

## Clean Air? - Take Care!®



**Helping You to Select the Correct  
Respiratory Protection**



## About Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE)

- RPE is designed to protect the wearer from breathing in hazardous substances in the air
- Failing to select, use, store and maintain the correct RPE can cause workers to breathe in too much of hazardous substances at work. This can cause: lung and airways diseases (e.g. asthma, cancers); diseases in other parts of the body (e.g. heart, kidney, reproductive and nervous systems)
- Using the wrong RPE can lead to fatalities in some cases (e.g. areas of low oxygen levels, confined spaces)

## There are two types of RPE (Respirators & Breathing Apparatus)

### Respirators

- Must use the correct filter(s) to remove contaminants (e.g.: dusts, sprays, mists, gases, fumes, vapours, micro-organisms or a combination of these) found in your workplace
- Must never be used in confined spaces, areas of low oxygen levels or very high contaminant levels. You should consider these situations as immediately dangerous to life or health. They are commonly found in confined spaces (e.g. chambers, tanks, vats, pits, trenches, pipes, sewers, flues or wells)

### Breathing Apparatus (BA)

- Must use breathing quality air from a source such as an air cylinder or an air compressor
- Must check the air quality at least once every three months or more frequently when the quality of the air supplied cannot be assured
- Suitable BA may be used in confined spaces

## When to use RPE

*RPE may be used in the following conditions:*

- As a last step control measure after putting in place other control measures (e.g. using contaminant suppression methods or extraction ventilation)
- For short-length or infrequent work where control at source is not practical
- As a temporary measure before other controls are in place
- For emergency work. e.g. breakdowns, maintenance, spills
- To escape in an emergency or to rescue people in danger
- As additional protection in case other control measures fail to operate

## 'CE' mark

- Means that the RPE meets the minimum design and performance features as set out in law
- A CE mark on RPE does not mean it is necessarily the correct type for your task. You must select the correct RPE for your task. Get professional help where necessary (institutions who can provide help are listed on the back page)

## Select the correct RPE

- Use the Table in this leaflet to write down your RPE selection requirements. You should have information about the wearers, hazards, hazardous substances, the tasks to be performed and the environment in which RPE is to be used. Without this information you will not be able to select the correct RPE
- Once you have completed all of the information in the Table, it should help you select the correct type of RPE for the work/task. BSIF member companies are able to provide help and assistance with product selection based on the information you provide
- As the employer, it is your responsibility to decide which RPE is right for the task undertaken

## Provide training

*To ensure RPE wearers know:*

- Why and when they need to use the RPE provided
- The correct procedures for fitting, use, cleaning, maintenance and storage of RPE
- The correct techniques to carry out the task/work when wearing RPE

## Using RPE

- Read and follow manufacturers' instructions to ensure: the RPE face piece fits the wearer every time it is worn; the RPE is tested and checked for correct functioning before use; the RPE is cleaned and stored correctly after use; the RPE is maintained and tested at least every month or discarded
- Keep records of maintenance carried out

*The information in this leaflet including those in the RPE Selection Table is based on HSE publications including HSG53 - Respiratory Protective Equipment At Work. For additional guidance refer to HSG53. It is available as a free to download on the HSE website at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).*

Please write in the box where indicated or circle your answer from the selection as appropriate

Describe the task or Job for which RPE is needed (e.g. Paint Spraying, Cleaning, Sawing, Welding)			
<b>Where is the work undertaken?</b>			
(i) A confined space (e.g. chamber, vat, tank, silo, pit, trench, sewer, flue, well)	Yes	No	Unsure
(ii) Space lacking oxygen (no free air exchange with outside air)	Yes	No	Unsure
(iii) Area with chances of sudden release of copious contaminants	Yes	No	Unsure
(iv) A flammable and/or explosive area	Yes	No	Unsure
<i>If yes or unsure, seek professional help to prevent the potential for fatalities or serious injury</i>			
List the chemicals in products being used as given in safety data sheets (get an up to date copy from your product supplier) and/or substances you create at work (e.g. welding fume, wood dust) and/or natural substance used (e.g. flour, and hay dusts)			
<i>If you do not know or are unsure, seek professional help</i>			
What are the Hazard phrases of the chemicals? (known as R-phrases or H-numbers listed in section 15 of the safety data sheet) Write here:			
How much of the product/substance is used or created each time the task is undertaken? Up to:			
<i>Handful or a few ml</i>	<i>A few Kg's</i>	<i>Tons</i>	
What is the physical form of the substances as supplied, used or created during work: Indicate all that apply:			
<i>Solid</i>	<i>Gas</i>	<i>Liquid</i>	
If a solid, how dusty is the substance?			
High = fine powder/dust cloud remains in the air for several minutes		<i>High</i>	
Medium = crystalline materials, dust in the air settles quickly		<i>Medium</i>	
Low = pellets, pill-like or waxy/sticky materials		<i>Low</i>	
If liquid, is it?			
<i>Water based</i>		<i>Solvent based</i>	
What temperature is the product used at?			
<i>..... °C</i>		<i>or room temperature</i>	
Does the task/job create: Please circle all that apply – if smoke tick dust			
		<i>Gas</i>	<i>Vapour</i>
		<i>Fume</i>	
<i>If unsure, seek professional help</i>			
		<i>Dust</i>	<i>Mist</i>
		<i>Spray</i>	
How long does it take to complete the job?			
(e.g. spraying a car - 20 minutes, sanding a wood panel - 10 minutes)		<i>..... Hours</i>	<i>..... Minutes</i>
How many times do you do the job each day?			
		<i>..... times a day</i>	

Please write in the box where indicated or circle your answer from the selection as appropriate

How long will the RPE be worn before it is taken off for a break or rest?									
Up to 1 hour		More than 1 hour							
How much physical effort is needed to do the task/job?									
Light - seated/stood still		Medium - sustained hand arm work		Heavy - heavy manual work					
When wearing RPE, is clear and precise verbal communication with others necessary?									
Vital		Not Necessary							
What are the other hazards associated with the task/job?									
This information is about the work area which is unusually different from a typical factory floor (e.g. unusually hot, cold, heavy winds). Please circle yes or no.									
Hot	Y / N	Cold	Y / N	Humid	Y / N	Wind	Y / N	Work at different heights	Y / N
Move around obstacles	Y / N	Flames/sparks/molten metal	Y / N	Power Tools used	Y / N				
Do any RPE wearers have:		Beard/stubble	Moustache	Extended sideburns					
Do any wearers need to wear:		Spectacles	Ear Muffs	Hard Hat	Eye Protection				

**Important**

It is necessary to select the correct size face piece for each wearer to ensure a good face seal. Ask your manufacturer/supplier about face piece fit testing. Some respiratory medical conditions may restrict or prevent some workers wearing RPE. You will need to ensure that these workers are medically fit to wear RPE. *(If unsure, seek medical advice)*

Once you have filled in all the information in this table seek guidance from your supplier. It is ultimately the responsibility of the employer to select adequate and suitable RPE based on a risk assessment.

Name of the person providing the information in this table:

Signature:

Date:

Company name:

**RPE Manufacturer/Supplier recommendation**

Protection factor (APF) recommended based on the information in this table: .....

Examples of RPE types/models available to meet the information provided: .....

If filters are required types recommended: .....

For more information



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