

Student Handout

Exposure to airborne contaminants

Some plumbing repair and installation tasks may produce very fine dust or gases that get into the air and that can make you sick or damage your lungs if you breathe them in.

Examples of hazards

- vapours from solvents
- fumes from welding and soldering
- dust particles from drywall and other repairs
- mist from spraying, mixing chemicals, and cleaning job sites

If there is a hazard of airborne material in your workplace, your employer is required by regulation to do a formal risk assessment and, if necessary, have a respirator program, including written work procedures.

Safety tips

- Use a respirator when doing work that requires it.
- Make sure you have training in using a respirator, and follow the written work procedure when you use it.
- Make sure you're using the right respirator for the job.
- Make sure the respirator fits you. If the respirator has a facepiece (mask) that seals to your face, you must be clean-shaven.
- If your respirator has a cartridge, check that it is the correct cartridge, and that you're using it correctly.

Safety alert

Let your instructor, supervisor or manager know if you have a breathing problem or claustrophobia, which may prevent you from using a respirator.

