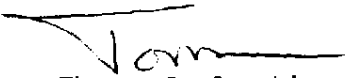




Interoffice Communication

To Distribution
From Tom Grumbles
Date June 13, 1983
Subject RESPIRATOR/BEARD POLICY

Enclosed is a second draft of the Chemicals' Respirator/Beard Policy. The majority of changes are editorial in nature. Of those comments received the major issue yet to be addressed is the interpretation of Section B.1.(a) dealing with use restrictions of beards and positive pressure respirators. We will discuss this issue at the I. H. meeting before finalizing the policy. Any further comments should also be made at the meeting.


Thomas G. Grumbles

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Enclosure

Distribution:

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CONOCO CHEMICALS: RESPIRATOR/FACIAL HAIR POLICY STATEMENT

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to clearly define the Chemicals Division's policy concerning respirator use with facial hair and to assist plants in developing respiratory protection procedures and policy. The principles outlined below are to be considered the minimum and individual plants may develop procedures that exceed these principles.

BACKGROUND

All respirators designed to achieve a tight face seal provide their maximum protection when no facial hair is in the seal area. However, certain respirators may provide adequate protection for bearded workers under some circumstances. Decisions on facial hair for specific respirator uses and conditions of use should be based on the following considerations.

A. Negative Pressure Respirators

1. Persons who wear face-fitting negative pressure respirators (including demand-type Self-contained breathing apparatus) during routine duties required for their job performance, or for purposes other than emergency egress, must be clean shaven. The one exception to this is outlined in A.2. below.

*Note 1

2. If respirators are provided at the desire of the worker, although exposure levels are below permissible limits, facial hair will be allowed if the following conditions are met:
 - a. No reasonably anticipated condition could cause exposure limits to be exceeded.

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- b. Optional use situations are clearly separated from required respirator use situations.
- c. The workers are instructed in the specific limitations of the use of negative pressure respirators with facial hair.
- d. The rationale and conditions of the exemption are documented.
- e. All other portions of the respirator program (inspection, cleaning, and storage, etc.) are followed.

B. Positive Pressure Respirators

- 1. Pressure demand respirators designed for a tight face seal shall not be used with facial hair in the seal area if:
 - a. the required protection factor might exceed 1,000 or is unknown (such as in fire-fighting).
 - b. in the case of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) the air volume remaining is a critical factor in the specific use (i.e., egress from confined space is necessary).
- 2. No planned entry of an immediately dangerous to life and health atmosphere shall be made by persons with facial hair in the seal area.

*Note 2

C. Continuous Flow Respirators

- 1. The same recommendations apply as for Positive Pressure Respirators provided:
 - a. a flow rate of at least 6 cfm is used.
 - b. the duration of air flow is not a consideration. (*Note 2)

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NOTE 1

If negative pressure respirator users choose to wear some facial hair but are clean shaven in the seal area to provide a proper sealing surface, it is recommended that some form of fit testing be used to demonstrate a proper fit.

NOTE 2

Actual fit testing data has shown that due to continual leakage, a beard may reduce the air supply duration of a SCBA with light exercise by as much as 20%. This consideration is especially important when the use of 5-minute emergency egress bottles is necessary.