

## 98-13: Respiratory Protection

### Information

### Action

---

#### **INFORMATION**

Final Rules for Respiratory Protection published by OSHA on January 8th took effect on April 8th. These rules require an employer to establish or maintain a respiratory protection program to protect their respirator wearing employees. These rules apply to construction, shipyard, longshoring and marine terminal workplaces. The 25 states and territories with their own OSHA-approved plans must adopt a comparable standard within six months. California has already published proposed changes to their safety and health code. These regulations are the first major revision to the OSHA respiratory protection requirements published in 1979 for the construction industry and in the 1960s for the maritime industries, and incorporate technical and procedural advances as well as consolidate fragmented respiratory protection requirements in other substance specific health standards.

Respirators are not usually required in our industry. However, companies may have situations where mechanics or gear men may be required to wear respirators.

Respirators must be provided by the employer when such equipment is necessary to protect the health of the employee.

"OSHA considers respirators to be necessary to protect the health of the employee whenever feasible engineering and work practice controls are not available, not sufficient to protect employee health, have not yet been instituted, in emergencies, and where the health of an employee is at risk (eg whenever the employee exposure exceeds an OSHA permissible exposure limit (PEL)."

#### **ACTION**

Employers should take note of the new regulations, and evaluate their operations to determine if respiratory protection is required at their facilities.

Copies of the new regulations may be obtained from PMA Area Training and Accident Prevention Departments, or they may be downloaded off the internet at: [http://www.osha-slc.gov/FedReg\\_osh\\_data/FED19981018.html](http://www.osha-slc.gov/FedReg_osh_data/FED19981018.html)