



## Respirator Protection for Formaldehyde

For any employee that works in an industry where formaldehyde is involved, even the slightest exposure can cause irritation to the eyes and mucous membranes of the upper respiratory system. Extended exposure can cause very serious issues such as severe abdominal pain, convulsions, diarrhea, bronchitis, and more. OSHA has identified formaldehyde as a cancer initiator, making proper respirator selection extremely important. Due to the irritation that can occur to the eyes, a full face respirator is recommended and in special cases where there is a potential for a large spill in a smaller space of confined area, a supplied air respirator is strongly recommended. Depending on the brand of respirator that is chosen, the proper cartridge will be one that is either an Organic Vapor/Formaldehyde Cartridge (3M™ #6005/Conney Item #75474) or a Multi-Gas Cartridge (Moldex® #7600/Conney Item #66669). A standard organic vapor cartridge is not acceptable for use with formaldehyde.



According to 3M™, a cartridge change-out schedule utilizing their service life software cannot be used for formaldehyde because OSHA has a specific standard regarding formaldehyde. This is due to the formaldehyde cartridges using treated carbon in a chemisorption process that doesn't work with their organic vapor formula. 3M™ recommends changing out a cartridge that is being utilized for protection from formaldehyde at the end of each work shift.

In addition to the above respiratory considerations, PPE including gloves, aprons, and splash goggles (if not using a full face respirator) should be worn and showers and/or eyewash stations should be considered where splashing of formaldehyde is likely.

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