

## Respiratory Protection

### Scenario Answer Key

The respiratory protection regulation (29 CFR 1910.134) establishes uniform guidelines for protecting workers when they must work in hazardous atmospheres. At 29 CFR 1910.134, OSHA defines disposable paper respirators, or dust masks, as “filtering facepieces.”

#### **It happened like this**

Rudy and Gerald were talking about the dust masks they were required to wear.

“I heard that we have to be trained to use these,” Rudy said. “Just like for regular respirators.”

“No, I don’t think so,” Gerald replied. “These are just dust masks. They aren’t considered respirators.”

Rudy asked the supervisor. The supervisor said that since they were just paper respirators, the OSHA respirator standard did not apply.

“Just use them,” Rudy was told by the supervisor. “Don’t worry about it.”

Rudy used the dust masks and thought about going to the union steward with the question.

#### **What were the issues?**

- Dust masks were required to be worn
- The respirator training was inadequate
- Supervisor did not understand the respirator program

#### **What did Rudy do right?**

- Was aware of respirator requirements
- Asked the supervisor about dust masks
- Used the dusk mask



**What did Rudy do wrong?**

- Didn't go to the union steward with the problem

**What did the supervisor do wrong?**

- Did not contact the safety person to learn more about respiratory protection requirements
- Did not properly train employees on respiratory protection

**What do you think should happen next?**

- Company should review their work practices
- Employees should be retrained on the company respiratory program
- Supervisor should be retrained on when the respiratory program applies

**Training tips**

Train your employees to:

- Read and follow manufacturer instructions on use, maintenance, cleaning, and care.
- Use the respirator for what the manufacturer designed it for and look for proper certification on the respirator or package.
- Don't wear respirators into atmospheres containing contaminants for which the respirator is not designed to protect the wearer against.
- Keep track of their respirator so as not to mistakenly use someone else's.

