# Is This Worker Using the Right PPE?

**What’s wrong with this picture?**



Hard hat…check

Eye protection…check

Safety gloves…check

Protective footwear…check

Respiratory protection: . . . *uh oh* . . .

Although he has almost everything he needs to operate that jackhammer safely, this worker is missing one important piece of PPE: respiratory protection to keep him from breathing in the dust he's kicking up.

**Moral:** Workers who use jackhammers, saws, grinders, and other tools that generate dust (or work at construction sites, oil rigs and other workplaces that contain high levels of dust in the air) need respiratory protection.

**HAZARDOUS DUSTS**

**WHAT'S AT STAKE**

**3 Reasons to Pay Attention**

1. A dusty workplace isn't just a sanitary issue but a health hazard
2. Dusts, or tiny particles in the air, can cause cancer, lung damage and other serious diseases if they get into your lung and blood stream—depending on the kind of substance the dust is made out of (e.g., asbestos can cause a disease called mesothelioma or asbestositis)
3. One of the best ways to keep dusts from entering your body is to use respiratory protective equipment—something the worker in the photo is not doing

**USE THE RIGHT RESPIRATOR FOR THE JOB**

**6 Kinds of Respiratory Protection Equipment**

Recognizing the need to use respiratory protection is half the battle. You also need to select the **right kind** of respiratory equipment. Here's an overview of the 6 basic kinds of respiratory protection equipment and what each one can and can't be used for:

**1. SINGLE-STRAP DUSK MASKS** ( not NIOSH-approved)

**Can Be Used for:** Less severe atmospheric hazards like pollen, allergens and non-toxic nuisance dusts

**Can't Be Used for:** Hazardous atmospheres



**2. APPROVED FILTERING FACEPIECES (DUST MASKS)**

**Can Be Used for:** Dust, mists, welding fumes, etc.

**Can’t Be Used for:** Gases, vapors, toxic minerals like asbestos and toxic metals like lead



**3. HALF-FACE RESPIRATORS**

**Can Be Used for:** Most vapors, acid gases, dust  or welding fumes as long as filter/cartridge matches contaminant and is changed periodically

**Can’t Be Used for:** Oxygen deficient or IDLH (immediately dangerous to life and health) atmospheres, confined space work or particulates the cartridge/filter isn’t designed to protect against



**4. FULL-FACE RESPIRATORS**

**Can Be Used for:** Most vapors, acid gases, dust or welding fumes as long as cartridges/filters match contaminant(s) and are changed periodically

**Can’t Be Used for:** Oxygen deficient or IDLH atmospheres, confined space work or particulates the cartridge/filter isn’t designed to protect against



**5. LOOSE-FITTING POWERED AIR-PURIFYING RESPIRATORS (PAPR)**

**Can Be Used for:** Most vapors, acid gases, dust or welding fumes as long as cartridges/filters match contaminant(s) and are changed periodically (and batteries to blowers are charged)

**Can’t Be Used for:** Oxygen deficient or IDLH atmospheres, confined space work or particulates the cartridge/filter isn’t designed to protect against



**6. SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA)**

**Can Be Used for:** Entry and escape from IDLH or oxygen-deficient atmospheres

**Can’t Be Used for:** Protection of workers with facial hair that gets between the face-piece sealing area of the mask and the face and interferes with the seal



**PROTECT YOURSELF FROM HARMFUL DUSTS**

**8 Respiratory Protection Do’s & Don’ts**

**X DON’T** use jackhammers, drills, and other dust generating tools without respiratory protection

√ **DO** select the right form of respiratory protection equipment for the job you’re doing

**X DON’T** use respiratory protective equipment if it’s defective or doesn’t fit you properly

√ **DO** immediately notify your supervisor if your respiratory equipment is broken or doesn’t fit you right

**X DON’T** tinker with your equipment, e.g., by drilling holes or painting it—your alterations might render the equipment ineffective

√ **DO** inspect your respiratory equipment each day before you use it

**X DON’T** eat, drink or smoke in work areas containing potentially harmful dusts

√ **DO** wash up and change your clothes after the shift ends so you don’t take the nasty dusts you were exposed to on the job site home to your family