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# TECH TIPS

a technical bulletin by the experts at Gaco Western

## PPE / Personal Protective Equipment



Having the appropriate PPE is an essential piece of the safety puzzle. After all mechanical measures are in place to make a work area safe, the next line of defense to protect yourself is PPE. We encounter many different types of job scenarios at jobsites – and we work with chemicals. Having the right PPE for the right job is a must to protect ourselves from exposure to chemicals and keep it off our skin and out of our eyes and lungs. There is an assorted list of PPE we use: protective suits - breathable to chemical resistant; respirators - APR cartridge to fresh air masks; gloves and goggles. The bottom line is to have the right protection for the task at hand and protect yourself at all times.

First let's talk about respiratory protection. Your company must first have in place a Respiratory Protection Program which is mandatory per OSHA. Go to OSHA.gov website and look up CFR 1910.134 for more information. Once you are in compliance with OSHA you are down to choosing the correct respirator for the job. Anyone in the spray zone should be on fresh air and those out of the spray zone at a minimum should have APR cartridge respirators on. When you exit the jobsite make sure you are clear or up wind of any exhaust from the worksite before taking off your mask. Outside the jobsite is your spray rig, if it is not properly vented or open you can also have potential for fumes to build up inside your rig from drums of chemical or solvents left open. If you have gas or diesel generators make sure they are exhausted properly out of the rig and not back into the rig causing potential carbon monoxide poisoning.



(Continued on page 2)

**Have an idea, suggestion or questions?**

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Page 1 of 2



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## PPE / Personal Protective Equipment (Continued)

Spray suits are a common form of PPE to keep spray foam and chemicals off our skin and clothing. Breathable suits are used mainly during the application of spray foam and are popular in warmer climates. Also be aware that foam reacting on a breathable suit will bleed through the suit, so make sure you have clothing on underneath. The chemical resistant suits are not breathable and will not allow raw chemical to penetrate through the suit. Chemical resistant suits are best when working with raw chemical such as combining drums, cleaning up spills, and application of spray foam.



Protective gloves are also necessary for many different kinds of jobs. When we are spraying we need to keep the mists and any reactive foam

off of our skin, so often applicators use a combination of gloves such as cotton, nitrile or latex, or a butyl rubber and flex cotton. While working with raw materials or solvents like cleaning guns or moving pumps a cotton glove will not do, a thick mil nitrile or latex will keep the materials off better. At times when we work with open drums or solvents in the rig not only do we worry about fumes but some of you still use the half mask APR respirators - we need to make sure we have some goggles on that would protect us from a chemical splash in the eye. 



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Page 2 of 2