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## Appendix A: Voluntary Respiratory Use

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards/infectious diseases when properly selected and worn. Respirator use can be encouraged to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers.

However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers wear respirators to avoid exposure to infectious diseases, even if the risk of infection is not significant.

If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all the instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning, care, and warnings regarding the respirators.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

*If you have any questions or concerns, please contact \_\_\_\_\_.*

