

B. The Rule and Affected Respirator Users

OSHA's proposed APF rule would amend 29 CFR 1910.134(d)(3)(i)(A) of the Respiratory Protection Standard by specifying a set of APFs for each class of respirators. These APFs specify the highest multiple of a contaminant's permissible exposure limit (PEL) at which an employee can use a respirator safely. The proposed APFs would apply to respirator use for protection against overexposure to any substance regulated under 29 CFR 1910.1000. In addition, OSHA rules for specific substances under subpart Z (regulated under the authority of section 6(b)(5) of the OSH Act of 1970, 29 U.S.C. 655) specify APFs for respirators used for protection against these chemicals (hereafter referred to as section 6(b)(5) substances). The proposed rule would supercede most of these protection factors, and harmonize APFs for these substances with those for general respirator use.

OSHA based estimates of the number of employees using respirators and the

corresponding number of respirator-using establishments on the recent NIOSH-BLS survey of respirator use and practices¹ (Ex. 6-3). The NIOSH-BLS survey provides up-to-date use estimates by two-digit industry sector and respirator type for establishments in which employees used respirators during the previous 12 months.² As shown in Table VI-1, an estimated 291,085 establishments reported respirator use in industries covered by OSHA's proposed regulation. Most of these establishments (208,528 or 71.6 percent) reported use of filtering facepieces. Substantial percentages of establishments also reported the use of

¹ Preliminary results from the 2001 NIOSH-BLS "Survey of Respirator Use and Practices", in press. NIOSH commissioned the survey to be conducted by BLS, who also tabulated the data after completing the survey.

² The survey was conducted between August 2001 and January 2002. It asked: "During the past 12 months, how many of your current employees used respirators at your establishment?" It excluded voluntary use of respirators from detailed followup respirator use questions (Ex. 6-3).

half-mask and full facepiece nonpowered air-purifying respirators (49.0 and 21.4 percent, respectively). A smaller number of establishments reported use of powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) and supplied-air respirators (SARs). Fifteen percent of establishments with respirators (43,154) reported using PAPRs and 19 percent (56,022) reported using SARs. Table VI-2 presents estimates of the number of respirator users by two-digit industry sector. An estimated 2.3 million employees used filtering facepiece respirators in the last 12 months, while 1.5 million used half masks, and 0.7 million used full facepiece nonpowered air-purifying respirators. Fewer employees reported using PAPRs (0.3 million) and SARs (0.4 million). The industry-specific estimates show substantial respirator use in several industries, including the construction sector, several manufacturing industries (SICs 28, 33, 34, and 37), and Health services (SIC 80).

BILLING CODE 4510-26-P