



Protecting you for life's *best* moments.®



Case Study:
Nova 2000[®] / Z3[™]

NICTD - Northern Indiana



With the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), blasting is part of our rail car maintenance. Blast cabinets are used for parts rehabbing. We do use large sandblasters for our heavy welding project too. That is why we also use the RPB Nova 2000 blast hoods.

Like with any PPE, no one really wants to wear it. There has to be some other draw...some other tangible benefit to wearing it. In some cases, PPE manufacturers try to make PPE look cool.



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Smog hog fume grabbers and fans do not provide complete protection from welding fumes without the use of a respirator. Respirators are cumbersome to wear and often hard to get a good seal for the best protection. They provide very limited protection for those who wear a certain amount of facial hair.

Many of our mechanical personnel and track welders, while professionals in their trade, are the beard wearing, rough-cut type. (Think Duck Dynasty and ZZ Top.) Staying OSHA compliant with facial hair requirements and annual fit testing is a chore for anyone.

There are two things that drove me to look into air supplied welding hoods. First, our rail cars were in need of some heavy maintenance. The structure is fairly intricate with the need for close-up, detailed welding. The shop area is very large and is not air-conditioned; making respirator use very uncomfortable, not to mention the added stress to breathe through them. Purchasing the Z3 Welder gear not only keeps them cool and comfortable, but it also provides them with superior eye and respiratory protection.

Another need was for our track welders. They often weld on appliances made with Manganese, a very unhealthy metal. They too often work in very hot conditions, so the Z3 Welder is fantastic for them as well, for all of the same reasons as the shop welders. I found out about RPB products by looking through old purchase order req's and seeing we had bought RPB products several years prior and decided to give RPB a shot. IDS Blast, out of Indianapolis, is a certified distributor of RPB products. Both RPB and IDS customer service have been a great help to me.

The welders are quite happy to be able to keep their facial hair! They also report being much more comfortable while working. The extra purchase of the optional cooling tube airflow adjustment valves helps a lot with this. Since using this product, I no longer get reports of "blow black stuff out of my nose when I get home." So they rest assured they are getting the best respiratory protection available.

While the initial investment in the supplied air system, including the Z3 Welder, may seem large at first, it has been well worth it. You cannot put a dollar figure on employee morale, or the long term health benefits, when you protect your employees from hazardous exposures. I can say that productivity has risen. The Mechanical Management staff have reported that the rail car welding project time has been cut in half.

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Priority number one is this: PROTECT THE EMPLOYEE. If the investment seems too large, or you are worried about the employees not wanting to use the system, buy it for one to try.

Test it with just one employee and watch them tell the others how nice it is, sit back and watch the rest of the team jump on the Z3 Welder bandwagon!

All I can say is, the testimonials speak loud and clear. As the Manager of Safety and Rules, I do not personally use the product, but I follow up with the workers. Every single one of them has been thrilled to have and use them. As mentioned above, there is no more “blowing black gunk out of my nose” anymore.

About the contributor

I’m Dave Timmomns, born and raised in Chicago-land, Northwest Indiana. I am 42 years old. My hobbies include music, specifically, I play guitar, bass, and drums. I enjoy hiking, hunting, fishing, and camping. As a railroader I started out in the Mechanical Department as a certified engineer and conductor. In this position I would move equipment around the terminal, switch cars in and out of the shop building and perform pre-trip inspections and brake tests. I did spend 3 years with the Gary, Indiana Fire Department where I became a firefighter, EMT, rescue specialist, and Haz-Mat Technician.

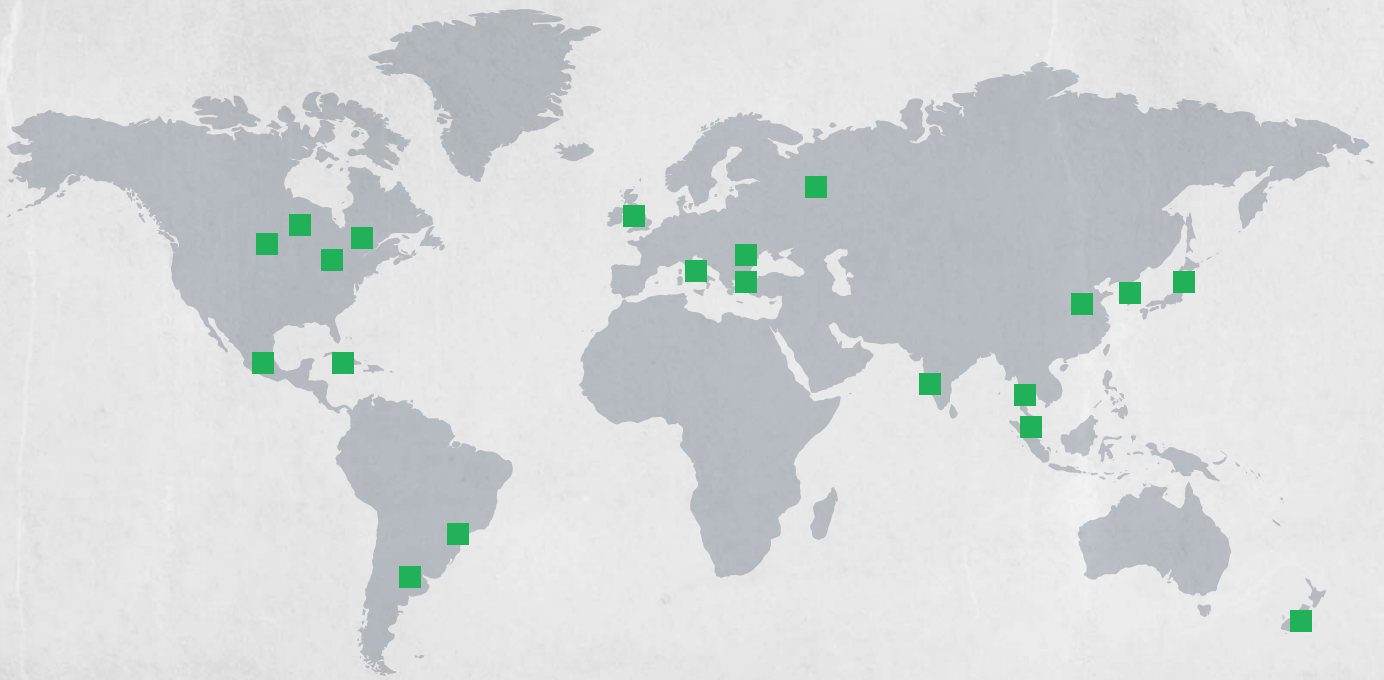


Z3™ Welding Respirator

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Protecting you for life's **best** moments.



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