

RESPIRATOR PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

While most air is safe to breathe, there are some processes that necessitate the use of respirator protection. The Occupational Safety and Health Standards (29 CFR Part 1926.103) establish permissible practices and requirements for a minimal acceptable program.

This Respirator Program is designed to set forth accepted practices for respirator use, as well as to provide information for training and guidance on the proper selection, use and care of respirators.

Company Responsibility:

- The Company will provide respirators when they are necessary to protect the health of the employee.
- The Company will provide the respirator that is applicable and suitable for the intended purpose.
- The Company will be responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a written respirator program that includes selection of the correct respirator for the hazard(s) involved.

Employee Responsibility:

- The employee shall use the respirator in accordance with instructions and training received.
- The employee shall guard against damage to the respirator.
- The employee shall report any trouble or malfunction of the respirator to supervisor.

MAINTENANCE AND CARE OF RESPIRATORS:

Inspection:

- All respirators shall be inspected routinely before and after each use.
- Respirator inspection shall include:
 - o Check tightness of connections and the condition of the facepiece.
 - o Check headbands.
 - o Check valves.
 - o Check connecting tube and canisters.
 - o Check rubber or elastomer parts for pliability and deterioration.

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Cleaning and Disinfection:

- Respirators shall be cleaned after each use.
- Cleaning Procedure:
 - o Remove any filters, cartridges and headbands.
 - o Wash all respirator parts (except cartridges and elastic headbands) in a cleaner disinfectant solution at not more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Use a hand brush to remove dirt, if necessary.
 - o Rinse completely in clean, warm water.
 - o Air dry in a clean area.
 - o Inspect all parts; if defective, bring respirator to supervisor for replacement or repair.
 - o Reassemble the respirator and insert new filters or cartridges, if required. Make sure the seal is tight.
 - o Disinfect all facial contact areas.
 - o Place the respirator in a plastic bag and seal it for storage.

Repair of Respirators:

- Only experienced persons shall do repair or replacement with parts designed for respirator and provided by manufacturer of that particular respirator.
- No attempt should be made to replace components or to make adjustment or repair beyond the manufacturer's recommendation.

Storage of Respirators:

- After inspection, cleaning and necessary repairs, respirators shall be stored to protect against dust, sunlight, heat, extreme cold, excessive moisture or damaging chemicals.
- Routinely used respirators, such as reusable dust respirators, must be placed in plastic bags during periods of nonuse.
- Respirators shall not be placed in such places as toolboxes unless they are in plastic bags.
- Respirators shall be packed or stored so the face piece is not distorted, and according to manufacturer's instructions.

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MEDICAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Persons will not be assigned tasks requiring the use of respirators unless they are physically able to perform the work and use the equipment.
- Employees who must wear respirators shall successfully complete a pulmonary function physical.
- The respirator user's medical status will be reviewed annually.

SELECTION, ISSUANCE AND TRAINING PRACTICES:

Selection of Respirators:

- The Safety Director will select respirator type and make.
- Only respirators approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health may be used.
- The proper type of respirator for the specific hazard involved will be selected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Issuance of Respirators:

- Management will determine if a respirator is needed.
- Air sampling will be taken and shall not be the determining factor in case of a disagreement between employer and employee on whether a respirator is needed.
- Employees will be required to wear breathing zone sampling apparatus for periods of time when air-sampling studies are being carried out. These studies will be done from time to time to assert that a respirator is or is not necessary.

Training Practices:

- Instruction in the nature of the hazard, with an appraisal of what may result if the respirator is not used.
- An explanation of why engineering controls are not immediately possible, and what effort is being made to eliminate the need for respirators.
- An explanation of why this is the proper type of respirator for the particular hazard.
- An explanation of the care and cleaning program.
- A discussion of the respirator's capabilities and limitations.
- Instruction and training in actual use, and close and frequent supervision to assure proper use.
- Any other emergency or special instructions.

OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR RESPIRATORS:

- The employee will clean their respirator daily. The Company will repair or replace new units.
- Respirators must be stored in the proper area when not being used.
- Whenever respirators are not in use during the shift, they must be stored in the clean plastic bag in which they were issued.
- Respirators may not be worn when conditions prevent a good face seal (such as racial hair or missing dentures).
- Before and after using a respirator, the employee or immediate supervisor must make an inspection of tightness of connections and the condition of the face piece, headbands, valves, filter holders and filters. If any questionable items are found, they must be corrected immediately.
- To assure proper protection, the wearer must check the face piece before each entry into a contaminated atmosphere.

POSITIVE PRESSURE TEST: Close the exhalation valve with your hand. Breathe air lightly into the mask. The fit is satisfactory if some pressure can be built inside the mask without any air leaking out between the mask and the face of the wearer.

NEGATIVE PRESSURE TEST: Close off inlet openings of cartridge with the palm of your hand. Some masks may require that the filter holder be removed to seal off the intake valve. Inhale gently so that a vacuum occurs within the face piece. Hold your breath for 10 seconds. If the vacuum remains, and no inward leakage is detected, the respirator is properly fit. Note: Care must be taken not to push the face piece onto the face, as this may give a better seal during the test than can be obtained in normal use.

CONTROL AND EVALUATION OF RESPIRATOR PROGRAM:

In order to maintain an effective respirator program, control and feedback on how the program is functioning is necessary. In this matter, improvements can be made and deficiencies eliminated.

Wearer acceptance should be viewed for the following:

- Comfort.
- Ability to breathe without objectionable effort.
- Adequate visibility under all conditions.
- Provisions for wearing prescription glasses.
- Ability to perform all tasks without undue interference.
- Confidence in the face piece fit.
- Frequent random inspections shall be conducted by the Safety Manager to assure that respirators are properly selected, used, cleaned and maintained.