



Spartanburg County

Safety Policy Manual

Policy: Respiratory Protection

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Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134)

We all need to breathe to live. That is a simple fact of life. However, sometimes breathing what's in the air can be hazardous to your health. Breathing in hazardous dusts, vapors, gases or fumes can cause health problems such as respiratory problems or cancer. Occasionally we could encounter atmospheres that could prove fatal because of contaminants in the atmosphere or an insufficient amount of oxygen. Atmospheres where the oxygen content is less than 19.5% require respiratory protection along with supplemental oxygen. By respiratory protection, we mean the use of a NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety) approved respirator. Everyone should understand the difference between a mask and a respirator. Masks are designed to protect employees from fluid and particulate splatter. Respirators are designed to filter the air that you breathe, removing potential contaminants. The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approved masks, while respirators are approved by NIOSH.

1. Before an employee can be issued a respirator to use on the job, a number of issues must be addressed. Department Heads and Supervisor's must perform a hazard assessment to determine what specific hazards exist. Once the specific hazard(s) have been identified, the department can look into determining the appropriate respirator. The OSHA Standard establishes very specific requirements that must be met in a respiratory protection program.
 - First, the department must designate an individual to serve as the Program Administrator.
 - Second, the Program Administrator must develop a written Respiratory Protection Program for the department. Paragraph (c) in the OSHA standard contains specific guidance on the elements that must be included in the written respiratory protection program.

Everyone cannot wear a respirator. OSHA requires that the employer provide medical evaluations for employees that must use respirators. Employees that wear glasses; have beards, mustaches or long sideburns; have respiratory problems such as asthma; have a heart condition, are heat sensitive or claustrophobic may not be able to use a respirator. Employees assigned to duty positions that require respirators must receive medical clearance to use the respirator on duty. Appendix C in the OSHA Respiratory Protection standard has all of the information that must be included on the employee medical questionnaire. Based upon the information provided by the employee, the physician will determine what testing is required. The physician can require a physical or even pulmonary function testing. Once the physician determines the employee is medically qualified to wear a respirator, the department will fit test the employee to determine the correct respirator for the employee. Fit testing will be accomplished through either a "qualitative" or "quantitative" fit test as prescribed in the standard. A "qualitative" fit test is defined as a pass/fail test to assess the adequacy of respirator fit that relies on the



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individual's response to a test agent. "Quantitative" fit testing means an assessment of the adequacy of the respirator by numerically measuring the amount of leakage into the respirator. Fit testing will be accomplished at the time the employee is assigned to the duty position, annually or whenever the employee has physical changes that may indicate a change in the size respirator used. Additionally, departments must adopt a facial hair policy, since no facial hair is allowed under the sealing surface of respirator face pieces. Appendix A in the OSHA standard provides specific guidelines for fit testing procedures.

2. Other departments may have hazards that require respiratory protection. This is why the initial hazard assessment by the department is important. All departments should take note that dust masks have been determined to be a filtration device. If the department requires employees use dust masks in the performance of their duties, then that department must meet all the requirements of the respiratory protection standard. However, departments may make the dust masks available for employees, if employees choose to use them. In this situation, the department is only required to provide the employee with a copy of Appendix D in the standard and insure the employee knows the correct use for the mask.
3. Respirators can be awkward to wear. Don't expect them to fit like your favorite pair of blue jeans. You should expect a respirator to fit so that it:
 - Is secure, but not too tight around your chin
 - Doesn't pinch the nose
 - Doesn't slip
 - Allows you to move your head and talk

Sometimes individual faces just don't fit into a respirator. If you have problems with a respirator, inform the departments Respiratory Protection Program Administrator. He is responsible for insuring you have a properly fitted respirator. Once you are fitted with a respirator, it should be inspected before and after each use to insure the respirator isn't damaged. Inspect the respirator for:

- Holes, cracks, tears, or other damage
- Connections that are not tight
- Signs of wear, especially in rubber parts like the face piece seal, head band, valves, connecting tube, fittings, canister or cartridges
- Dents or corrosion in filters, cartridges and canisters
- An air or oxygen cylinder that is not fully charged

If you see any damage or anything that doesn't look right, don't use the respirator. Report it immediately to your Supervisor. After each respirator use, you should take time to perform the proper maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer. Remove the respirator carefully so that you do not get any contamination on yourself. Follow the recommended decontamination procedures. Once the respirator has been decontaminated, clean and disinfect the respirator. Store the respirator in its proper place.



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It should be stored away from dust, light, heat, cold, moisture or other chemicals. Be sure that any rubber or plastic pieces are in their normal position. Storing the respirator improperly can damage it and reduce the lifespan of the respirator.

4. Employees must be thoroughly trained on the use, inspection, maintenance and storage of any respirator they will use on the job. Paragraph (k) in the OSHA standard contains very specific guidance on the training that must be accomplished. Employers must be able to document employee training within the past twelve (12) months. Employees must be retrained annually or whenever changes in the workplace are made or the employee demonstrates an inadequate knowledge of the respirator. Figure 1 shows a Respiratory Protection Checklist that will aid departments in meeting the compliance criteria in the standard. Figure 2 shows the Medical Questionnaire that must be used when medically qualifying employees for respirator use.



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Figure 1
Respiratory Protection Checklist

Do you:

- _____ Use an assigned NIOSH approved respirator when necessary?
- _____ Check the cartridge or canister color-coding to be sure the respirator protects against the specific contaminant?
- _____ Check the end of service life indicator or follow the change schedule for canisters or cartridges described in our respirator program?
- _____ Use an atmosphere-supplying respirator whenever there's not enough oxygen?
- _____ Check the fit of the respirator before each use for a tight seal?
- _____ Check the condition of the respirator before each wearing?
- _____ Understand the conditions that may make it possible for a person to wear a respirator?
- _____ Know how to put on your respirator properly?
- _____ Recognize that respirators may slow you down or make it more difficult to do certain tasks?
- _____ Pay attention to the quality of your air supply and get to fresh air when:
 - You're wearing an air-purifying respirator and you can taste or smell an air contaminant?
 - You're wearing an atmosphere-supplying respirator and it signals that your air supply is low?
- _____ Report – and not wear – a respirator that shows any damage?
- _____ Remove a respirator in such a manner that you don't contaminate yourself?
- _____ Clean and disinfect your respirator after each use?
- _____ Store a respirator carefully in its assigned location?



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Figure 2

OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire

To the Employer: Answers to questions in Section 1 and to question 9 in Section 2 of Part A, do not require a medical examination.

To the Employee: Can you read? (circle one): YES NO

Your employer must allow you to answer this questionnaire during normal working hours or at a time and place that is convenient to you. To maintain your confidentiality, your employer or supervisor must not look at or review your answers, and your employer must tell you how to deliver or send it this questionnaire to the healthcare professional that will review it.

Part A. Section 1. (Mandatory): Every employee who has been selected to use any type of respirator must provide the following information. (Please print!)

1. Today's date: _____

2. Name: _____

3. Age (to the nearest year) _____

4. Sex (circle one) Male Female

5. Height: _____ ft _____ in

6. Weight: _____

7. Job Title: _____

8. A phone number where the Healthcare Professional who reviews this questionnaire can reach you. Include area code: _____

9. The best time to phone you at this number: _____

10. Has your employer told you how to contact the health care professional who will review this questionnaire (circle one)? YES NO

11. Check the type of respirator you will use (you can check more than one category):

a. N, R or P disposable respirator (filter-mask, non-cartridge type only)

b. Other type (for example, half- or full-face piece type, powered air purifying, supplied-air, self-contained breathing apparatus) _____

12. Have you worn a respirator (circle one): YES NO If yes, what type(s)?



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Part A. Section 2. (Mandatory): Every employee who has been selected to use any type of respirator must answer Questions 1 through 9 below (circle yes or no):

1. Do you currently smoke tobacco or have you smoked tobacco in the last month? Yes/No

2. Have you had any of the following conditions?

Yes No

- Seizures (fits)
- Allergic reactions that cause breathing problems
- Diabetes (sugar)
- Claustrophobia (fear of closed in places)
- Trouble smelling odors

3. Have you had any of the following pulmonary or lung problems?

Yes No

Yes No

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Asbestosis | Asthma |
| Chronic Bronchitis | Emphysema |
| Pneumonia | Tuberculosis |
| Silicosis | Pneumothorax (collapsed lung) |
| Lung Cancer | Broken Ribs |
| Chest Injury/Surgery | Any lung problem |

4. Do you currently have any of the following symptoms of pulmonary or lung illness?

Yes No

- Shortness of breath?
- Shortness of breath when walking fast on level ground or walking up a slight hill or incline?
- Shortness of breath when walking with other people at an ordinary pace on level ground?
- Have to stop for breath when walking at your own pace on level ground?
- Shortness of breath when washing or dressing yourself?
- Shortness of breath that interferes with your job?
- Coughing that produces phlegm (thick sputum)?
- Coughing that wakes you early in the morning?
- Coughing that occurs mostly when you are lying down?
- Coughing up blood in the last month?
- Wheezing?
- Wheezing that interferes with your job?
- Chest pain when you breathe deeply?
- Any other related symptoms that you think may be related to your lungs?



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5. Have you had any of the following cardiovascular or heart problems?

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Heart attack			Stroke		
Angina			Heart failure		
Heart arrhythmia (irregular heart beat)			High blood pressure		
Any other heart problem					

6. Have you had any of the following cardiovascular or heart symptoms?

	Yes	No
Frequent pain or tightness in your chest?		
Pain or tightness in your chest during physical activity?		
In the past two years, have you noticed your heart skipping or missing a beat?		
Heartburn or indigestion that is not related to eating?		
Any other symptoms that may be related to heart or circulation problems?		

7. Do you currently take medication for any of the following problems?

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Breathing or lung problems			Blood pressure		
Heart trouble			Seizures (fits)		

8. Have you ever used a respirator? Yes/No If you have used a respirator, have you ever had of any of the following problems? If you have never used a respirator, go to question no. 9.

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Eye irritation			Skin allergies or rashes		
Anxiety			General weakness or fatigue		
Any other problems that would interfere with your use of a respirator?					

9. Would you like to talk to the Healthcare professional who will review this questionnaire about your answers to this questionnaire: Yes/No

Questions 10 to 15 must be answered by every employee who has been selected to use either a full-face piece respirator or a self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). For employees who have been selected to use other types of respirators, the following questions are voluntary.

10. Have you ever lost vision in either eye (temporarily or permanently): Yes/No

11. Do you currently have any of the following vision problems?

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Wear contact lenses			Wear glasses		
Color blindness			Any other vision problem		



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12. Have you ever had an injury to your ears, including a broken eardrum: Yes/No

13. Do you currently have any of the following hearing problems?

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Difficulty hearing			Wear a hearing aid		
Any other hearing or ear problem					

14. Have you ever had a back injury: Yes/No

15. Do you currently have any of the following musculoskeletal problems?

	Yes	No
Weakness in any of your arms, hands, legs or feet		
Back pain		
Difficulty fully moving your arms and legs		
Pain or stiffness when you lean forward or backward at the waist		
Difficulty fully moving your head up or down		
Difficulty fully moving your head side to side		
Difficulty bending at your knees		
Difficulty squatting to the ground		
Climbing a flight of stairs or a ladder carrying more than 25 lbs.		
Any other muscle or skeletal problems that might interfere with using a respirator		