

## RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Respiratory Protection Program is directed to ensure employees are protected from hazardous atmosphere through a comprehensive program of recognition, evaluation, engineering, administrative controls, work practice controls, and personal protective equipment. Hazard elimination and engineering, along with work practice controls, shall be employed to control employee exposure to within allowable exposure limits as much as possible. Respirators and other personal protective equipment (PPE) shall be provided to affected employees under this program. (See appendix Respiratory docs)

### SCOPE

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This program applies to all county employees who need to wear a respirator to perform assigned duties. In addition, any employee who voluntarily wears a respirator when one is not required is subject to the medical evaluation, cleaning, maintenance and storage elements of this program, and will be provided with necessary training. **Employees who voluntarily wear dust masks are not subject to the medical evaluation, cleaning, storage and maintenance provisions of this program.**

### HAZARD ASSESSMENT AND RESPIRATOR SELECTION

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- Respirators shall be selected based on the workplace hazards and in accordance with the TOSHA Respiratory Protection Standard.
- Employees will be given the opportunity to select their respiratory protection from a variety of suitable respiratory protection. All respirators must be certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and shall be used in accordance with the terms of that certification.
- A hazard assessment shall be conducted in each work area where airborne contaminants may be present in routine operations or during an emergency. The assessment shall be updated as needed – i.e., any time work process changes may potentially affect exposure. The hazard assessment shall include:
  - Identification and development of a list of hazardous substances used in the workplace, by department or work process.
  - Review of work processes to determine where potential exposures to these hazardous substances may occur. This review shall be conducted by surveying the workplace, reviewing process records, and talking with employees and supervisors.
  - Exposure monitoring to quantify potential hazardous exposures.

### HAZARD ASSESSMENT AND RESPIRATOR SELECTION - CONTINUED

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If an employee feels that respiratory protection is needed during a particular activity, the employee is to contact their immediate supervisor. If it is determined that respiratory protection is necessary, all other elements of the respiratory protection program will be in effect for those tasks and the respiratory program will be updated accordingly. The County shall authorize voluntary use of respiratory protective equipment as requested by all other workers on a case-by-case basis, depending on specific workplace conditions and the results of medical evaluations. These employees will be provided a copy of Appendix D of the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard 1910.134).

## MEDICAL EVALUATION

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Employees, who are required to wear a respirator, must pass a medical exam before being permitted to wear a respirator on the job. Employees are not permitted to wear respirators until a physician has determined that they are medically able to do so. Any employee refusing the medical evaluation will not be allowed to work in an area requiring respirator use. A licensed physician will provide the medical evaluations. Medical evaluation procedures are as follows:

- The medical evaluation will be conducted using the questionnaire provided in Appendix C of the respiratory protection standard.
- To the extent feasible, the County will assist employees who are unable to read the questionnaire. When this is not possible, the employee will be sent directly to the physician for medical evaluation.
- All affected employees will be given a copy of the medical questionnaire to fill out, along with a stamped and addressed envelope for mailing the questionnaire to the physician. Employees will be permitted to complete the questionnaire on company time.
- Follow-up medical exams will be granted to employees as required by the standard, and/or as deemed necessary by the evaluating physician.
- All employees will be granted the opportunity to speak with the physician about their medical evaluation, if they so request.
- The evaluating physician shall be provided a copy of this Respiratory Protection program, a copy of the TOSHA Respiratory Protection Standard, the list of hazardous substances by work area, and the following information about each employee requiring evaluation:
  - The employee's work area or job title
  - Proposed respirator type and weight
  - Length of time required to wear respirator
  - Expected physical work load light, moderate or heavy

- Potential temperature and humidity extremes
- Any additional protective clothing required

## MEDICAL EVALUATION - CONTINUED

- Positive pressure air purifying respirators will be provided to employees as required by medical necessity.
- After an employee has received clearance to wear the respirator, additional medical evaluations will be provided under the following circumstances:
  - The employee reports signs and/or symptoms relating to their ability to use a respirator, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, and chest pains or wheezing.
  - The evaluating physician or supervisor informs the Safety Coordinator of the need to be reevaluated;
  - Information from this program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need for reevaluation;
  - A change occurs in workplace conditions that may result in an increased physiological burden on the employee.

**All examinations and questionnaires remain confidential between employee and physician.**

## FIT TESTING

Employees who are required to wear respirators will be fit-tested:

1. Prior to being allowed to wear a respirator with a tight-fitting face piece;
  2. Annually; or
  3. When there are changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respiratory fit (e.g., obvious change in body weight, facial scarring, etc)
- Employees will be fit-tested with the make, model and size of the respirator that they will actually wear. Employees will be provided with several models and sizes of respirators so that they may find an optimal fit.
  - The fit test will be conducted in accordance with Appendix A of the TOSHA Respiratory Protection Standard 1910.134.
  - The fit testing shall be documented and kept on file by the Safety Coordinator. The documentation shall include the type, model and size of respirator for each employee.

## GENERAL RESPIRATOR USE, CLEANING, MAINTENANCE, STORAGE AND REPAIRS

- Employees will use their respirators under conditions specified in this program, and in accordance with the training they receive on the use of each particular model. In addition, the respirator shall not be used in a manner for which it is not certified by NIOSH or by its manufacturer.
- All employees shall conduct user seal checks each time they wear their respirators. Employees shall use either the positive or negative pressure check (depending on which test works best for them) as specified in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard.
- All employees shall be permitted to leave the work area to go to the locker room to maintain their respirator for the following reasons:
  1. To clean their respirator if the respirator is impeding their ability to work;
  2. To change filters, cartridges or to replace parts; or
  3. To inspect the respirator if it stops functioning as intended.

### **Employees should notify their supervisor before leaving the area.**

- Employees are not permitted to wear tight-fitting respirators if they have any condition, such as facial scars, facial hair, or missing dentures that would prevent a proper seal. Employees are not permitted to wear headphones, jewelry, or other items that may interfere with the seal between the face and the face piece.
- Before and after each use of a respirator, the employee must make an inspection of tightness or connections and the condition of the face piece, headbands, valves, filter holders and filters. Respirators that are defective or have defective parts shall be taken out of service immediately.
- Respirators are to be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Respirators issued for the exclusive use of an employee shall be cleaned as often as necessary.
- Respirators are to be properly maintained at all times in order to ensure that they function properly and protect employees adequately. Maintenance involves a thorough visual inspection for cleanliness and defects.
- Worn or deteriorated parts will be replaced prior to use. No components will be replaced or repairs made beyond those recommended by the manufacturer.
- After inspection, cleaning and necessary repairs, respirators shall be stored appropriately to protect against dust, sunlight, heat, extreme cold, excessive moisture or damaging chemicals.
- Respirators must be stored in a clean, dry area and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

- Respirators shall not be placed in places such as lockers or tool boxes unless they are in carrying cartons.

\*SEE APPENDIX FOR RESPIRATOR PROGRAM FORMS

## TRAINING

Employees required to use respirators and their supervisors shall be trained on the contents of the County's Respiratory Protection Program, their responsibilities under it and on the TOSHA Respiratory Protection Standard. Employees will be trained prior to using a respirator in the workplace. Supervisors will also be trained prior to using a respirator in the workplace or prior to supervising employees that must wear respirators. The training will cover the following topics:

- The County Respiratory Protection Program;
- The OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134);
- Respiratory hazards encountered within the respective departments and their health affects;
- Proper selection and use of respirators;
- Limitations of respirators;
- Respirator donning and user seal (fit) checks;
- Fit testing;
- Emergency use procedures;
- Maintenance and storage;
- Medical signs and symptoms limiting the effective use of respirators.

Employees will be trained annually or as needed – i.e., if they change departments and need to use a different respirator. Employees must demonstrate their understanding of the topics covered in the training through hands-on exercises and a written test. The training shall be documented and kept on file by the Safety Coordinator.

## DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDKEEPING

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A written copy of this program and the TOSHA Respiratory Protection Standard shall be kept in the Safety Coordinator's office and made available to all employees who wish to review it. The Safety Coordinator shall maintain copies of training and fit test records. These records will be updated as new employees are trained, as existing employees receive refresher training and as new fit tests are conducted. For employees covered under this Respiratory Protection Program, the Safety Coordinator shall maintain copies of the physician's written recommendation regarding each employee's ability to wear a respirator. The completed medical questionnaires and evaluating physician's documented findings will remain

confidential in the employee's medical records at the location of the evaluating physician's office.