

Respiratory Protection Program Summary

This guidance sheet provides a summary of UI's Respiratory Protection Program and is intended for employees who are required to use respirators and their supervisors. For requirements pertaining to voluntary use, see the EHS Guidance Document, Respiratory Protection - Voluntary Use of Respiratory Protection Equipment.

Pre-Use

Contact EHS prior to assigning work or working in atmospheres that may require respiratory protection. EHS will assess and document potential air contaminants, workplace conditions, and user factors to assist in selecting the appropriate type of respirator.

Medical Qualification

Prior to initial required use of a respirator, an employee must be qualified by a medical professional. Medical qualification will consist of completion of a respirator questionnaire by the employee and review by a medical professional. In some cases, the employee may be subject to a follow-up phone call, medical examination, and/or additional tests.

Medical re-evaluation is required:

- Annually;
- When an employee reports medical signs or symptoms related to their ability to use a respirator;
- When observations are made that indicate a need for employee re-evaluation.
- When change(s) occur in the workplace conditions that may result in substantial increase in the physiological burden placed on the employee during respirator use.

To begin the medical evaluation process, contact EHS. The questionnaire contains confidential medical information and should be handled and transmitted only by the employee. UI does not file or maintain copies – this is the responsibility of the medical provider.

If the medical provider determines that the employee requires further testing, someone from the medical provider's office will contact the employee. After completing the evaluation, the medical provider will notify EHS if the employee is able to wear a respirator. EHS will not fit-test an employee until the medical qualification is obtained. EHS will send reminders to ensure that medical evaluations occur at the required intervals.

Training

EHS conducts respirator training. Training must be completed prior to initial use and annually thereafter. Employees and their supervisors are responsible to ensure that refresher training is completed annually, although EHS will send reminders.

Re-training is also required:

- When an employee is assigned a new type of respirator;
- When significant changes occur in the workplace that render previous training incomplete or obsolete; or
- When observations of the employee's skills or knowledge indicate that prior training was insufficient or not retained.

Successful completion of training requires the user to demonstrate knowledge of:

- Why the respirator is necessary and how improper fit, use or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator;
- The limitations and capabilities of the respirator;
- How to use the respirator effectively in emergency situations, including situations in which the respirator malfunctions;
- How to inspect, put on and remove, use and check the seals of the respirator;
- Procedures for maintenance and storage of the respirator; and
- Medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators.

Fit-Testing

EHS conducts fit-testing for respirator users. The purpose of fit-testing is to select a respirator that provides the user with an adequate fit so the assigned protection factor remains valid. Fit-testing must be completed prior to initial use and annually thereafter. Additional fit-testing is required if:

- An employee is assigned a different make, model, style, or sized respirator;
- If the employee has a change in condition that may affect the fit of the respirator (e.g., facial scarring, change in body weight, dental or facial structural changes, etc.).

Employees must be clean-shaven where the face meets the facepiece at the time of fit-testing and during use. Employees and their supervisors are responsible to ensure that fit-testing is completed annually; although EHS will send reminders.

Equipment Purchase

Following successful completion of training and fit-testing, EHS will provide employees and their supervisors with written information that prescribes the type, style, and size of respirator and necessary accessories (e.g., filters, cartridges, etc.) to which the employee has been medically-qualified, trained, and fit-tested. The fit-test, training and possibly medical qualification, is valid **ONLY** for the respirator described.

In all circumstances, only NIOSH-approved respirators are appropriate. Employers are responsible for the cost of respirator purchase, as well as maintenance of a suitable stock of replacement parts and consumables (e.g., filters, cartridges, etc.).

Manufacturer's Instructions & NIOSH Certification

Manufacturer's instructions for use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the assigned respirator's limitations must be read and observed at all times. A label or statement of certification will appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. The label will state what contaminants the respirator is designed for and the level of protection that it will provide. Use must conform to the conditions of the NIOSH certification at all times.

Unsuitable Atmospheres

Employees must not wear respirators into atmospheres containing contaminants or levels that are not compatible with their assigned respirator. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect against gases and vapors.

Individual Use

In most circumstances, employees are assigned a respirator for their own personal use. Employees should keep track of their assigned respirators so that another person does not use it. Respirator users are instructed to conduct routine "seal checks" each time that a tight-fitting respirator is used.

Cleaning and Storing Equipment

Respiratory protection equipment must be kept clean. Single-use respirators must not be reused. For durable equipment, designate an area with a sink and provide the supplies necessary for properly cleaning the equipment, in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. These supplies will generally include respirator wipes, soap and water, a disinfectant solution, and containers for storing the equipment.

Records

EHS will maintain the most current assessment, fit-testing, and training records, as well as the most recent medical qualification statement. The medical provider will maintain confidential medical records. Records pertaining to respirator and cartridge use (when using a cartridge change schedule) and respirator maintenance are maintained at the local level, in accordance with department procedures.

Changing Conditions

Promptly notify EHS of any changes in user's personal conditions that may affect their ability to wear a respirator, as well as conditions of use (e.g., temperature extremes, different PPE, exertion requirements, potential atmospheric contaminants or approximate concentrations, etc.). Changing conditions may trigger the need for a new exposure assessment, review by the medical professional, re-training and/or fit-testing.

The information in this guidance sheet supplements the UI Respiratory Protection Program (RPP). Please refer to the full program document for more information.