



Environmental Health and Safety Department & Chemical Hygiene Respiratory Protection Program

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of Hartwick College occupational health program is the prevention of adverse health effects. In cases where elimination, engineering and work practice control measures are not feasible, the use of respirators becomes imperative. Respiratory protection is available to individuals exposed to fumes, mists, dusts materials above the permissible exposure limits or working in oxygen deficient environment. The purpose of Hartwick College Respiratory Protection Program is to meet the entire regulatory requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's standard for Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1910.134). The safe use of a respirator requires at a minimum that the following program elements be addressed.

- Program administration
- Exposure assessment
- Medical evaluation of respirator wearers
- Training
- Respirator fitting
- Cleaning, inspection, maintenance and storage
- Proper selection of respiratory protective equipment

RESPONSIBILITIES

Environmental Health, Safety & Chemical Hygiene Department (EHSCH)

Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for the administration of the respiratory protection program which include;

- Conduct exposure assessments to identify the need for respirators and also to identify the level of protection required. Maintain any air sampling results conducted.
- Develop, provide and maintain required Respiratory Protection training
- Provide fit testing annually for tight fitting respirators
- Conduct annual review of Respiratory Protection Program

Laboratory Managers/ Principal Investigators

- Assist in health hazard evaluation
- Provide medical clearance, fit testing and respirators to personnel at no cost to the user
- Ensure personnel required to wear a respirator are enrolled in the Respiratory Protection Program
- Identify employees required to wear respirators

Respirator User (Employees, Students)

- Obtain medical clearance to wear a respirator
- Undergo fit testing and training
- The respirator wearer shall use the respirator properly when required by specified work activity
- The user should consult the Respiratory Program regarding maintenance and storage of respirators
- Notify supervisor of any indication that exposure to air contaminants may be occurring

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Medical Evaluation

According to OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134, personnel whose task requires the use of a respirator must get clearance from a physician or licensed health care provider (PLHCP). The physician will determine an employee's fitness to wear a respirator. Medical clearance must be conducted before fit testing. Consequently, respirator selection must occur prior to medical evaluation. A medical questionnaire must be submitted to the physician. The physician may require additional information or medical examination. Upon completion of medical assessment, the physician provides the respirator user with a copy of the Health Care Provider's Recommendation. This document will indicate the personnel's health qualifications to wear a specific respirator. Medical records are retained by the physician. Medical evaluations must be provided to the respirator

user at no cost. Individuals who do not pass the medical clearance cannot wear a respirator and should be moved to a different assignment.

Respirator Selection Requirements

Respirators shall be selected on the basis of the respiratory hazards in the workplace. Environmental health and safety department is responsible for making the final determination on the type of respirator needed for specific task. The work place evaluation includes an identification of the contaminants chemical state and physical form. Air sampling may be conducted. Only NIOSH approved respirators are required.

Training

Personnel should be instructed on proper use of the respirator. The workers need to be trained upon initial assignment of a respirator and followed up with annual training. Environmental Health and Safety Department is responsible for training development, implementation and recordkeeping associated with the Respiratory Protection Program. Each respirator wearer must demonstrate knowledge of at least the following:

- How to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may alter effective use of respirator
- Steps for maintenance and storage of the respirator
- How to inspect, put on and remove, use and check the seals of the respirator
- Limitations and capabilities of the respirator
- The necessity of the respirator and how improper fit, usage, or maintenance can ruin the protective effect of the respirator

Respirator Fit-testing

Environmental Health, Safety & Chemical Hygiene Department provides respiratory fit testing for all individuals required to use tight fitting respirator. Fit testing is conducted before initial use and annually. Quantitative testing is the standard method but qualitative testing methods will also be employed. The following conditions must be attained before fit testing:

- Completion of relevant training
- Medical clearance from Physician
- User must have no facial hair that may interfere with respirator seal at the time of fit test

- The user must demonstrate understanding of techniques regarding inspection, donning and doffing for that particular respirator.

Respirator Use

Respirator users should follow the instruction provided using Respiratory Protection training. Users should inspect and conduct a successful fit check of tight fitting respirator before each use. If a respirator user experience symptoms including difficulty breathing, or dizziness etc., they shall immediately leave the hazardous surrounding and notify supervisor. Use of spectacles, goggles can be worn with a respirator. But, it should be worn in a manner that will not interfere with respirator function. Cartridges shall be changed out following manufacturer's recommendations.

Maintenance and Storage

Respirators must be inspected, cleaned and sanitized before use. Follow manufacturer's recommendations regarding clean and sanitization of respirators. Cleaned respirators shall be stored in a clean, dry environment away from chemicals, heat source or cold. Respirators can be stored in containers or bag to reduce contamination. Only certified individuals can perform maintenance or repairs and replacement parts shall be specified by manufacturers.

Program Evaluation

Environmental Health, Safety & Chemical Hygiene Department will conduct Respiratory Protection Program evaluations as needed. Audits and inspections will be implemented and any deficiencies corrected by responsible parties.

