It is the policy of the Washington University Environmental Health & Safety office to provide its employees with a safe and healthful work environment. The guidelines in the respiratory protection program are designed to help reduce employee exposure against occupational dusts, fumes, mists, biological, radionuclides, gases and vapors. The primary objective is to prevent excessive exposure to these contaminants. This is accomplished as far as feasible by accepted engineering and work practice control measures. When effective engineering controls are not feasible, or while they are being implemented or evaluated, respiratory protection may be required to achieve this goal. In these situations, respiratory protection, training and medical evaluations are provided at no cost to the employees.

When considering the use of any type of respiratory protection, contact the Respiratory Protection Program Administrator in the Environmental Health & Safety Office at 747-8412 prior to purchasing or wearing a respirator/respiratory protection.
Medical Approval

Every employee being considered for inclusion in the Respiratory Protection Program is required to complete a medical evaluation for review by a Licensed Health Care Professional. The employee is required to fill out the Medical Questionnaire for Respirator Users which will be sent to Barnes Care or WUSM Employee Health for review by a Licensed Health Care Professional. However, it is acceptable for any trained Licensed Health Care Professional to review. The employee must undergo an initial medical examination that obtains the same information as the medical questionnaire. A follow-up medical examination will be provided for an employee who gives a positive response to any questions 1 through 8 in Section 2, Part A of the Medical Questionnaire for Respirator Users or whose initial medical examination demonstrates the need for a follow-up medical examination.

All medical questionnaires and examinations will be administered confidentially during the employee’s normal working hours or at a time and place convenient to the employee. The employee will complete the questionnaire and return it to the program administrator, Jon Kruyne WUSM employee Health or Barnes Care, in a sealed envelope. The purpose of the questionnaire and the initial and follow-up examination is to assure that the employees are physically and psychologically able to perform their work while wearing respiratory protective equipment. If the physicians denies approval, the employee will not be able to participate in the Respiratory Protection Program.

Employee Training

Each employee designated to wear a respirator must receive adequate training. The initial training session will be conducted by the respiratory protection program administrator. Training must include respirator limitations, use, and maintenance of respiratory equipment.

Retraining will be given at least every 12 months after initial training and when changes in the workplace or the type of respirator make the previous training obsolete, inadequacies in the employee's knowledge or use of the respirator indicate that the employee has not retained the requisite understanding or skill, or any other situation arises in which retraining appears necessary to ensure safe respirator use.

Fit Testing

Employees who use tight-fitting respirators will be properly fitted and tested for a face seal prior to use of the respirator in a contaminated area. Qualitative fit testing will be performed every 12 months.

Fit testing will be done initially upon employee assignment to an area where respirators are required. All tight-fitting respirators (negative and positive pressure) will be fit tested. Positive pressure tight-fitting respirators will be fit tested in the negative pressure mode.
Additional fit tests will be conducted whenever the employee reports, or the PLHCP, supervisor, or program administrator makes visual observations of changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respirator fit. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, facial scarring, dental changes, cosmetic surgery, or an obvious change in body weight.

If after passing a fit test, the employee subsequently notifies management (e.g., supervisor, program administrator, or PLHCP) that the fit of the respirator is unacceptable, the employee will be given a reasonable opportunity to select a different respirator facepiece and to be retested.

NOTE: If it is determined that an individual cannot obtain an adequate fit or face seal with any negative pressure respirator, a loose-fitting powered air purifying or supplied air respirator will be used instead.

Fit testing of employees with any hair growth such as stubble beard growth, beard or long sideburns that extends under the face seal or interferes with valve function is prohibited.

**Cleaning & Disinfecting**

Respirators not discarded after one shift use will be cleaned on a daily basis (or after each use if not used daily) according to the manufacturer's instructions by the assigned employee or other person designated by the Respiratory Protection Program Administrator. Respirators issued to more than one employee will be cleaned and disinfected before being worn by different individuals. This may require cleaning more frequently than on a daily basis. Respirators used in fit testing and training will be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Facilities and supplies for cleaning these respirators will be made available.

**Routine Inspection of Respirators**

All respirator users must routinely inspect the following:

- **Rubber facepieces** should be checked for:
  - Dirt, cracks, tears, or holes
  - Distortion from improper storage
  - Cracked, scratched or loose fitting lens
  - Broken or missing mounting clips
- **Headstraps** should be checked for:
  - Breaks or tears
  - Loss of elasticity
  - Broken or malfunctioning buckles or attachments
  - Excessively worn serrations of the headstraps which might allow the facepiece to slip
- **Valves**
  - Detergent residue, dust or dirt on the valve seat
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- Cracks, tears or distortion in the valve
- Missing or defective cover

- Filter Elements
  - Proper type of filter for the job and contaminants
  - Approved design
  - Missing or worn gaskets
  - Worn threads
  - Cracks or dents in the housing

Storage

Respirators not discarded after one shift use will be stored in a suitable container away from areas of contamination. The respirators will be stored in a location where they are protected from sunlight, dust, heat, cold, moisture, and damaging chemicals and they will be stored or packed to prevent deformation of the facepiece and exhalation valve. Whenever feasible, respirators not discarded after one shift use, will be marked and stored in such a manner to assure that they are worn only by the assigned employee.

Program Administrator
Jon Kruyne, Health & Safety Professional III
Environmental Health & Safety

747-8412