

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM

DECEMBER 7, 2021

Purpose

The standard, on which all respiratory protection plans are based is OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910. 134 “Personal Protective Equipment – Respiratory Protection.” The objective of this plan is to provide Town employees with a safe and healthy work environment. The guidelines established in this program are designed to help reduce employee exposure to any respiratory hazard that may be encountered while performing various work assignments for the Town.

Controlling employee exposures through engineering controls, such as ventilation and substitution of less toxic materials followed by proper work practices that reduce employee exposure are to be implemented first and foremost. When effective engineering controls are not feasible, respiratory protection may be required to achieve this goal.

Scope and Application

This Plan applies to all Town employees who may be required to work in hazardous atmospheres in which contaminants that cannot be reduced by engineering controls and requires the utilization of respirators. This may include normal work processes/operations, maintenance activities and during some non-routine or emergency operations. All employees working in areas that require the need for respiratory protection must be enrolled in the Town’s respiratory protection program.

Responsibilities**A. Program Administrator**

The Program Administrator is responsible for administering the Respiratory Protection Program. Responsibilities for the Program Administrator include:

- Identifying situations requiring mandatory use of respirators.
- Selection of respiratory protection options that meet guidelines for the situation.
- Monitoring respiratory use to ensure that respirators are used in accordance with their certifications.
- Arranging for training.
- Ensuring the conduct of fit testing.
- Administering the medical evaluation and surveillance program.
- Maintaining records required by the Program.
- Evaluating the Program.
- Updating the Program, as needed.

The Program Administrator is the Risk Management and Safety Program Coordinator.

B. Manager

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the Respiratory Protection Program is implemented. In addition to being knowledgeable about the Program requirements for their own protection, supervisors must also ensure that the Program is understood and followed by employees. Responsibilities of the

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supervisor include:

- Ensuring that employees under their supervision (including new hires) have received appropriate training, medical evaluation, and fit test if duties involve a respirator.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate respirators.
- Being aware of tasks requiring the use of respiratory protection.
- Enforcing the proper use of respiratory protection when necessary.
- Ensuring that respirators are properly cleaned, maintained, inspected, and stored according to the Respiratory Protection Program.
- Ensuring that respirators fit well and do not cause discomfort.
- Coordinating with the Program Administrator on how to address hazards or other concerns regarding the Program.

C. Employees

Employees have the responsibility to:

- Wear their respirators when and where required and in the manner in which they were trained for donning and doffing.
- Care for and maintain their respirators as instructed, and store them in a clean, sanitary location when reuse protocols are in effect.
- Inform their supervisor if the respirator no longer fits and request a new one.
- Inform their supervisor or the Program Administrator of any respiratory hazards they feel are not adequately addressed in the workplace and of any other concerns that they have regarding the Program.
- Inform their supervisor of need for a medical re-evaluation.

Program Elements

A. Hazard Assessment and Respirator Selection

The Program Administrator will select respirators to be used based on the airborne transmissible hazards to which employees are exposed and in accordance with all applicable OSHA standards. The Program Administrator will conduct a hazard evaluation and document the evaluation. The hazard evaluation will involve a review of job tasks to determine where potential exposures may occur with employees.

The Program Administrator will revise and update the hazard assessment as needed. If an employee feels that respiratory protection is needed during a particular activity, he/she is to contact his or her supervisor or the Program Administrator. The Program Administrator will then:

- Evaluate the potential hazard, arranging for outside evaluation if necessary.
- Communicate the results of that assessment back to the employees. If it is determined that respiratory protection is necessary, all other elements of this Program will be in effect for those

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tasks, and this Program will be updated accordingly.

B. Jobs where Respirators are Required

- Fireman
- Police
- Water Treatment: Respirators are required to be worn in an escape situation when handling gas chlorine. A building will not be entered when a chlorine leak is detected.
- Wastewater Treatment: Respirators are required to be worn in an escape situation when handling gas chlorine. A building will not be entered when a chlorine leak is detected.

C. Voluntary Respirator Use

The Town also allows for voluntary use of respirators under certain circumstances. Under the voluntary Respiratory Use Program, the Town will:

- Authorize voluntary use of respiratory protective equipment as requested by employees on a case-by-case basis, depending on specific workplace conditions and the result of medical evaluations.
- Provide all employees who voluntarily choose to wear a respirator with a copy of Appendix D as specified by OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134). Appendix D details the requirements for voluntary use of respirators by workers and is appended to this Program.

D. Medical Evaluation

Employees who are either required to wear respirators or choose to do so and are covered by this Program, must pass a medical evaluation before being permitted to wear a respirator on the job. Employees are not permitted to wear respirators, as covered by this Program, until cleared to do so by a physician or licensed healthcare professional ("PLHCP").

Any employee who refuses the medical evaluation will not be allowed to work in a position requiring respirator use. All affected employees will be given a copy of the medical questionnaire to complete.

The PLHCP will provide the medical evaluations. Medical evaluation procedures are as follows:

- The evaluation will be conducted using the questionnaire provided in Appendix C of OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard: [1910.134 App C - OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire \(Mandatory\). | Occupational Safety and Health Administration.](#)
- The Program Administrator will provide a copy of this questionnaire to all employees requiring medical evaluations. The questionnaire should be completed by the employee

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prior to meeting with the PLHCP.

- The following medical tests will be completed if deemed necessary by the PLHCP:
 - Basic physical examination
 - Pulmonary function tests including FVC and FEV (if indicated)
 - The physician will be responsible for requesting any test (e.g., chest x-ray, EKG) he or she feels necessary to render a qualified opinion
- After an employee has received clearance and begun to wear his or her respirator, additional medical evaluations will be provided under the following circumstances:
 - Employee reports signs and/or symptoms related to their ability to use a respirator, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pains, or wheezing.
 - The medical clinic PLHCP or supervisor informs the Program Administrator that the employee needs to be re-evaluated.
 - Information about this program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need for re-evaluation.
 - A change occurs in workplace conditions that may result in an increased physiological burden on the employee.

All examinations and questionnaires are to remain confidential between the employee and the PLHCP.

E. Fit Testing

Fit testing is required for employees who are required to wear any tight-fitting respirator and shall be conducted:

- Prior to the employee being allowed to use that type of respirator.
- Annually
- When there are changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respiratory fit (i.e., obvious change in body weight, facial scarring, etc.)

Employees will be fit tested with the make, model, and size of respirator that they will wear.

A positive and negative fit test shall be conducted for each negative cartridge-type respirator prior to donning.

F. Cleaning and Disinfecting

All respirators shall be cleaned and disinfected per the manufacturer's requirements as follows:

- Permanently assigned respirators – those respirators assigned to an employee for his or her exclusive use shall be cleaned and disinfected as needed, but no less than monthly.
- Temporary or emergency assigned respirators – those respirators assigned on an emergency or temporary basis shall be cleaned and disinfected each use and prior to each reassignment to

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another employee.

Respirators must be stored in a location where they are protected from sunlight, dust, heat, cold, moisture, and damaging chemicals. They will be stored in a manner to prevent deformation of the face piece and exhalation valve. APRs will be stored in a re-sealable bag (i.e., Ziploc gallon size bag).

G. Inspection and Repair

All respirators used under permanent or temporary assignment must be inspected prior to donning by the assigned employee. Inspections will be performed *at least monthly*. The employee will be responsible for the inspection of the following:

- Straps, cartridges
- Face seal
- Exhaust and inlet valves
- Air hose connections and/or blower (if used)
- Batteries (if used)
- Mask lens

If repairs are needed, these should be completed in accordance with manufacturer's written instructions. Emergency assigned respirators will be inspected *at least monthly*. More frequent inspections may be required by the program administrator.

H. Qualitative Fit Test

Qualitative fit tests involve a test subject's responding to a chemical challenge outside the respirator face-piece. Three of the most popular are:

- An irritant smoke test
- An odorous vapor test (isoamyl acetate-banana oil)
- A taste test (saccharin solution)

These tests are fast, easily performed, and use inexpensive equipment. Because these tests are based on the respirator wearer's subjective response to a controlled chemical, reproducibility and accuracy may vary.

I. Documentation and Recordkeeping

A written copy of this program is kept in the Program Administrator's office and is available to all employees who wish to review it. Also maintained are 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.

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The Program Administrator will also maintain a copy of the PLHCP written recommendation regarding each employee's ability to wear a respirator (medical evaluation) for all employees covered under the respirator program. The completed medical questionnaire and the PLHCP documented findings are confidential and will remain at the medical clinic.

Summary of Program

Any respirator program should stress through training of all its participants, especially the users who need or may need to wear respirators. Employers must be aware that the equipment does not eliminate the hazard. If the equipment fails, overexposure will occur. To reduce the possibility of failure, equipment must be properly maintained in a clean and serviceable condition. Supervisors must stress the importance to their employees of always keeping their respirator in perfect working condition. It could save their life.

Remember, even if the worker feels he/she will never have to wear respirator equipment, if the job or position requires the equipment to be at the job site, then the workers must follow all the requirements and procedures as if they were wearing the equipment every day.