

# THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM

## **PURPOSE**

This purpose of the University's Respiratory Protection Program is to protect employees from harmful dusts, fumes, gases, vapors or other respiratory hazards through the use of engineering controls, administrative controls or personal protective equipment.

## **GENERAL**

When effective engineering or administrative controls are not feasible or practical, the use of respiratory protection equipment may be necessary to protect the health of the employee.

## **SCOPE**

The following University departments are required to participate in the program:

- Paint shop
- Ceramics
- Quick Construction
- Pesticides

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Office of Risk Management is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of the University's Respiratory Protection Program.

Supervisors are responsible for providing respirators and enforcing the respirator program in the work areas. Employees are responsible for using respiratory protective equipment properly and inspecting respirators before and after each use.

## **WORKPLACE ASSESSMENT**

Risk Management conducts respiratory hazard assessments to determine whether respirators are necessary or prudent. If Risk Management determines that a respirator is necessary or prudent, the employee must obtain a respirator medical clearance, receive respirator fit testing and be fit tested.

Risk Management coordinates respirator medical clearance evaluations for employees through Washington Occupational Health Associates.

## **APPROVED RESPIRATORS**

The University's Respiratory Protection Program requires that only NIOSH-approved respirators be used by employees.

## **RESPIRATOR SELECTION**

The selection of respirators is based on the following determinations:

- Nature of hazard
- Facial characteristics of the operator.
- Worker activity and respirator use time.
- Respirator characteristics and capabilities
- Respirator fit and protection factor.
- Worker acceptance

## **HEALTH QUALIFICATIONS**

Employees must receive annual medical evaluations prior to being assigned jobs that require the use of respirators. In addition, if an employee chooses to voluntarily wear an approved respirator, he or she must also receive annual medical evaluations prior to its use.

## **FIT-TESTING**

Fit-testing shall be performed annually for all workers or upon written request. Qualitative fit -testing will be performed on the workers' personal respirators. This service will be performed by the Office of Risk

## **ISSUE OF RESPIRATOR**

Respirators and cartridges will be supplied to the employees by Facilities Management.

## **RESPIRATOR INSPECTION, MAINTENANCE & STORAGE**

All respirators must be properly inspected, maintained and stored after each use. The following outline for inspection, maintenance and storage is recommended:

### **Inspection**

Inspect respirators before each use and during cleaning. The inspection should include a check of:

- Respirator function
- Tightness of connections
- Condition of the various parts (e.g., facepiece, head straps, valves, cartridges, canisters or filters)
- Elasticity of pliable parts

### **Maintenance**

Clean and disinfect respirators after each days use. Follow the manufacturer's directions or the following procedures to clean the respirator.

- Removal of cartridges, filters, inhalation and exhalation valves.
- Soak and wash face piece, plastic filter holders, straps and inhalation and exhalation valves in a solution of water and an acceptable cleaner.
- A small-bristled brush, such as a toothbrush or nailbrush may be needed to aid in cleaning.
- Rinse completely in warm water.
- After drying and re-assembly is complete, the cleaned respirator must be placed in a clean plastic or paper bag to prevent contamination during storage.

### **Storage**

- Store respirator in a clean sealed plastic or paper bag to avoid contamination prior to use.
- Store away from excessive heat or cold and in an area free from contamination.
- Store in such a manner that the face piece or any of its parts are not distorted.

## **TRAINING**

**Training Overview** – The Office of Risk Management will provide training under the following conditions:

- Upon being initially assigned to a job task that requires respirator use.
- When changes in the workplace or the type of respirator render 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
- Any other situation arises in which retraining appears to ensure safe respirator use.

### **Training Outline**

The following are the minimum training requirements for employees who wear respirators.

- Explanation of Exposures Encountered
- Respirator Selection
- Responsibilities
- Demonstration

### **Training Opportunities**

Training will be provided to all personnel who are required to wear respirators. Employees who wish to be trained, but are not required to wear a respirator, may request training from the Office of Risk Management.

### **Training Verification**

All employees who receive the required Respiratory Protection training must, upon completion, have a signed and dated verification on file with the Office of Risk Management.

## **MONITORING RESPIRATOR USE**

Supervisors shall periodically monitor the use of respirators to ensure proper wear, care and condition. Corrective administrative action shall be taken for failure to use the respiratory protective equipment as trained.

**RESPIRATOR PROGRAM EVALUATION**

The respirator program will be evaluated for its effectiveness by the Office of Risk Management annually.

**MORE INFORMATION**

Please the Office of Risk Management at 465-7003 for more information on program requirements.