

Wellness @Work

Fall 2013

Respiratory Protection Programs

Are your workers exposed to airborne contaminants, physical hazards, and biological agents? OSHA requires your company to use engineering controls to prevent occupational diseases caused by breathing air contaminated with harmful dusts, fumes, mists, gases, sprays, and vapors.

The OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134) requires respirators be used in areas where engineering controls alone cannot protect workers from atmospheric contamination at the worksite. The standard requires employers to establish or maintain a respiratory protection program to protect their employees including:

Program Administration

A program administrator must oversee and evaluate the respirator program; be suitably trained; and have the appropriate accountability and responsibility to manage the full respiratory protection program.

Respirator Selection

Where required, respirators and their associated requirements (such as medical evaluations and maintenance) must be provided by the employer. Employers must identify and evaluate respiratory hazards in the workplace, including a reasonable estimate of employee exposures to respiratory hazards and identification of any contaminant's chemical state and physical form.

Medical Evaluation

Because using a respirator may place a physiological burden on employees, the employer must provide a medical evaluation to determine the employee's ability to use a respirator before the employee is fit tested or required to use the respirator in the workplace.

Fit Testing

Before an employee may be required to use any respirator with a negative or positive pressure tight fitting face-piece, the employee must be fit tested with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator to be used.

Employees using tight-fitting face-piece respirators must pass an appropriate qualitative fit test (QLFT) or quantitative fit test (QNFT).

Maintenance

Appropriate surveillance of work area conditions and the degree of employee exposure or stress must be maintained as long as respiratory protection is used. If there is a change that may affect the equipment's effectiveness, the employer must re-evaluate the respiratory protection.

Employers must provide for the cleaning and disinfecting, storage, inspection, and repair of respirators used by employees.

Training

Supervisors and workers must be properly instructed in the selection, use, and maintenance of respirators by competent individuals.

Employers are required to provide comprehensive, understandable, and regular training to employees who are required to use respirators.

Program Evaluation

Employers must establish and retain written information regarding medical evaluations, fit testing, and their respiratory program. This information will facilitate employee involvement in the respirator program; assist the employer in auditing the adequacy of the program; and, provide a record for compliance determinations by OSHA.

MED-1 Can Help

If your company needs assistance in complying with the OSHA requirements for respiratory protection, MED-1 can help by providing the medical evaluation and information on how to ensure your employees are safe and protected in their use of respirator equipment.

We understand the most recent requirements and can provide you with assistance in setting up, coordinating, and maintaining your respiratory fit testing program.

For more information, contact Mary Alice at 616-459-1560.

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Protect Yourself with Respiratory Equipment

Respiratory protection must be worn whenever you are working in a hazardous atmosphere. The appropriate respirator depends on the contaminants and the protection factor required.

Choosing the Right Protection



Single-strap dust masks are useful in providing comfort from pollen and other allergens.

Approved filtering face-piece dust masks protect from dust, mists, welding fumes, and other similar materials. They do not provide protection from gases or vapors, asbestos or lead.



Half-face respirators protect against most vapors, acid gases, dust or welding

fumes. Cartridges/filters must match contaminants and should be changed periodically.

Full-face respirators provide more protection from irritants to face and eyes.



Loose-fitting powered-air-purifying respirators (PAPR) offer breathing comfort from a battery-powered fan which pulls air through filters and circulates air throughout the helmet/hood. PAPR's can be worn by most workers with facial hair.



A self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) uses its own air tank and is used for entry and escape from atmospheres considered immediately dangerous to life and health or oxygen-deficient environments.



OSHA's respiratory protection standard (29 CFR 1910.134) requires:

- ✓ Evaluation of airborne contaminant levels;
- ✓ Proper respirator selection;
- ✓ Proper training on use, cleaning, and disinfecting of a respirator including information on storage and monthly inspection; and
- ✓ Performing fit testing and annual medical evaluations on employees who wear respirators.

For more information, visit osha.gov and search on respiratory protection.

MED-1 Wellness Services

Screenings

- Height & Weight
- Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Body Composition
- Blood Pressure
- Cholesterol
- Diabetes
- Colo-rectal cancer
- PSA

Specialized Programs

- Health risk appraisals
- Immunizations
- Smoking cessation
- Customized worksite programs
- Drug free worksite
- Special exams

Education

- CPR/First Aid training
- AED programs
- Wellness coaching
- Health fairs
- Wellness education



Wellness at Work is a informational publication provided by

MED-1 Occupational Health System to facilitate health and wellness initiatives for employees.

For more information on any topics presented or to access additional copies of current or past issues, contact Tammie Milligan at 616.459.1570 or go to — www.med1services.com.