

Respiratory Protection Program

POLICY

To help ensure the health of employees at Washington State University, Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) administers the respiratory protection program.

Prior to respirator use:

- Employees are to be medically cleared to use respirators through an established process administered by EH&S,
- Environmental Health and Safety is to complete hazard assessments of work areas and proposed work tasks,
- Employees are to complete respirator training, *and*
- Employees are to receive respirator fit tests.

Respiratory Hazards and Controls

Upon request by units or employees, EH&S conducts respiratory hazard assessments of work tasks to determine if respiratory protection is needed.

NOTE: Before EH&S approves respirators for employee protection, units must reduce employee hazard exposure by utilizing engineering or procedural controls or by substituting less hazardous chemicals for hazardous ones. Engineering controls may include fume hoods or local exhaust (e.g., flex hose extending directly from ceiling duct). Procedural controls may include wet methods of working and cleaning to control airborne dust.

Once EH&S identifies a hazard, employees are to wear respirators as long as the hazard exists or until the unit removes or controls the hazard and receives clearance from EH&S.

Tasks Requiring Hazard Assessment

Respiratory protection is to be considered when tasks create dusts, mists, fumes, or vapors. The following tasks typically require a respiratory hazard assessment:

- Grinding
- Sanding
- Sweeping
- Sawing
- Drilling
- Crushing
- Welding
- Soldering
- Brazing
- Painting

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Tasks Requiring Hazard Assessment (cont.)

- Working with solvents
- Working with acids
- Using chemical outside of a fume hood
- Using products in a powered form
- Using any of the following:
 - Gases
 - Cleaners
 - Waxes
 - Polishes
 - Paint strippers
 - Degreasers
 - Refrigerants
 - Pesticides
 - Herbicides
 - Fungicides
 - Inks
 - Dyes
 - Oils
 - Lubricants

For tasks not listed above and/or to determine whether or not a respirator is needed, contact EH&S for assistance.

RESPIRATOR APPROVAL

Before any employee uses a respirator at the University, the following steps must be completed.

Hazard Assessment

Environmental Health and Safety must perform a workplace hazard assessment.

Medical Questionnaire

The employee must complete a confidential medical questionnaire supplied by EH&S.

Health Care Professional Review and Approval

Environmental Health and Safety sends copies of the hazard assessment and medical questionnaire to a licensed health care professional for review. The review process allows a licensed health care professional to medically clear an individual for respirator use and to set a schedule for future reviews. Licensed health care professionals typically medically clear individuals for one to three years. Environmental Health and Safety requests licensed health care professionals to perform medical evaluations at least as frequently as required by the applicable *Washington Administrative Code*.

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Health Care Professional Review and Approval (cont.) Environmental Health and Safety has agreements with several licensed health care professionals throughout the state who review hazard assessments and medical questionnaires upon request. Contact EH&S for more information.

Fees The licensed health care professional charges a fee to evaluate the employee's medical questionnaire and hazard assessment. Additional fees may apply if the health care professional requires that the employee receive a physical examination or other medical evaluations prior to being cleared to use a respirator. The employing department is responsible for paying all such fees.

Fit Test and Training Once medical clearance is obtained, EH&S schedules the employee for a respirator fit test and training.

Authorization Once the fit test and training are completed, EH&S provides the individual with a copy of an approved Hazard Assessment/Respirator Authorization form as a record of respirator training and fit testing.

Purchasing Respirator Departments may purchase respirators through University Stores or from other vendors. When purchasing a respirator from University Stores, the employee must present a copy of the approved Hazard Assessment/Respirator Authorization form.

RESPONSIBILITY

Supervisor The unit supervisor is responsible for ensuring that employees follow the University's respiratory protection program requirements.

The supervisor ensures that:

- Environmental Health and Safety conducts a hazard assessment whenever a new product is brought into use, a work process changes, or a new work process is adopted.
- Employees have access to a copy of the written respiratory protection program at all times.

Supervisors are to contact EH&S to obtain copies of the written respiratory protection program.

- Employees wear respirators when necessary.

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Supervisor (cont.)

- Employees have access to a clean sink and are provided time to clean respirators daily.
- Employees clean and store respirators properly.
- Employees receive an annual fit test.
- Employees use respirators only for those tasks specified in the respirator authorization forms provided by EH&S.
- Employees who use respirators do not have facial hair that will interfere with the respirator/face seal.

Employee

Each employee who uses a respirator is responsible for:

- Wearing the respirator when required.
- Cleaning the respirator after every use.
- Storing the respirator in a sealed container or bag.
- Changing the cartridges according to the interval specified in the respirator authorization form.
- Trimming facial hair so that hair does not come between the sealing surface of the respirator and the face and does not interfere with respirator valve function.
- Using a respirator **only** for tasks that the unit has identified to EH&S and that EH&S has documented on the employee's respirator authorization form.
- Receiving an annual fit test and training from EH&S.

EH&S

Environmental Health and Safety manages the University's respiratory protection program. Contact EH&S for further information and assistance; telephone 509-335-3041.

An industrial hygienist at EH&S is the University's Respirator Program Administrator. The Respirator Program Administrator or an EH&S-certified individual is responsible for:

- Evaluating respiratory hazards.
- Conducting ongoing evaluations of work tasks and environments.

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EH&S (cont.)

- Training employees and supervisors.
- Determining the appropriate respirator for each individual and task.
- Fit-testing employees and supervisors.
- Collecting air samples as needed.
- Periodically evaluating the University's respiratory protection program to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.