Respiratory Protection Program

POLICY

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

Prior to respirator use, *all* the following steps must be completed:

- Departments or areas complete hazard assessments identifying respirators as required personal protective equipment. (See *SPPM* 3.10.)
- Campus EH&S departments review the hazard assessments and concur or identify other, more appropriate hazard controls.
- Employees are to be medically cleared to use respirators through an established process administered by the campus EH&S.

  The process must incorporate either the questionnaire in *WAC* 296-842-22005 (Table 10) or an equivalent examination process that obtains the same information.

  NOTE: This requirement applies to all respirators, including powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs).
- Employees are to complete respirator training. Respirator training must include:
  - Pre-use inspection criteria;
  - Proper use;
  - Cleaning; and
  - Storage.
- Employees are to receive respirator fit tests.

Respiratory Hazards and Controls

Upon request by units or employees, the applicable campus EH&S assists with respiratory hazard assessments of work tasks to determine if respiratory protection is needed. See Campus EH&S for contact information.

NOTE: Before the applicable campus EH&S approves respirators for employee protection, units must reduce employee hazard exposure by:

- Eliminating respiratory hazards;
- Substituting less hazardous products or chemicals;

Respiratory Protection Program

Respiratory Hazards and Controls (cont.)

- Utilizing engineering controls, which may include fume hoods or local exhaust (e.g., flex hose extending directly from ceiling duct); or

- Utilizing administrative controls, which may include wet methods of working and cleaning to control airborne dust.

When conditions warrant respiratory protection, personnel who have been medically approved, trained, and fit-tested within the previous 12 months must wear respiratory protection until the airborne hazard is reduced to acceptable levels. Personnel who do not meet all these requirements may not remain in the hazard area.

The applicable campus EH&S may assist with determining whether the selected respirators provide adequate protection or when respiratory protection is no longer required.

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
- Milling
- Machining
- Crushing
- Welding
- Soldering
- Brazing
- Painting
- Working with solvents
- Working with acids
- Using chemicals outside of a fume hood
- Using powdered products
- Tasks where airborne biological hazards may be present
- Using any of the following:
    - Gases
    - Cleaners
    - Waxes
    - Polishes
    - Paint strippers
    - Degreasers
    - Refrigerants
    - Pesticides

Respiratory Protection Program

Tasks Requiring Hazard Assessment (cont.)

- Herbicides
- Fungicides
- Inks
- Dyes
- Oils
- Lubricants
- Composite materials

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

RESPIRATOR APPROVAL

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

Hazard Assessment

The department or area must conduct a workplace hazard assessment. The applicable campus EH&S must review the hazard assessment and concur or identify other, more appropriate hazard controls. (See Campus EH&S for contact information.) NOTE: Other methods to control the hazard must be attempted prior to utilizing a respirator.

Medical Questionnaire

The employee must complete a confidential medical questionnaire.

For evaluation by the University's respiratory protection program licensed medical evaluation service provider (see below), the employee completes the questionnaire at the EH&S Respiratory Protection website:

ehs.wsu.edu/respiratory-protection/

For evaluation by another licensed health care provider, the employee or health care provider may obtain the questionnaire from *WAC* 296-842-22005 (Table 10) or create an equivalent document that includes all the same questions.

Medical Evaluation Review and Approval

The department or area sends copies of the hazard assessment and medical questionnaire to either a licensed respiratory protection medical evaluation service provider or a licensed health care professional for review.

Instructions for submitting an assessment and questionnaire to the University's licensed medical evaluation service provider are available to WSU employees from the EH&S Respiratory Protection website:

ehs.wsu.edu/respiratory-protection/

Respiratory Protection Program

Medical Evaluation Review and Approval (cont.)

NOTE: WSU Pullman EH&S recommends that employees at WSU Pullman and WSU research and extension centers and stations (REC/RES) obtain medical evaluation review and approval from the University's licensed medical evaluation service provider. Employees at other WSU locations are to contact the applicable campus EH&S for instructions. (See Campus EH&S.)

The review process allows a licensed medical evaluation service provider or health care professional to medically clear an individual for respirator use and to set a schedule for future reviews. The licensed medical evaluation service provider or health care professional typically medically clears an individual for one to three years. EH&S requests that the licensed medical evaluation service provider or health care professional perform medical evaluations at least as frequently as required by the applicable *Washington Administrative Code*.

The medical evaluation service provider or health care professional returns approval, limited approval, or nonapproval to the applicable EH&S department for the employee to use respirators. Contact the applicable campus EH&S office for more information.

Fees

The licensed medical evaluation service provider or health care professional charges a fee to evaluate the employee's medical questionnaire and hazard assessment. (See the EH&S Respiratory Protection website for fee information.)

Additional fees may apply if the medical evaluation service provider or health care professional requires the employee to 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, the campus EH&S schedules the employee for a respirator fit test and training.

NOTE: The campus EH&S may require the use of a respirator fit-testing service provider. The employing department is responsible for paying any fees charged for fit-testing services. Contact the applicable campus EH&S office for more information.

Authorization

Once the fit test and training are completed, the campus 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. (See Fit Test and Training above.)

NOTE: Respirator fit testing and training are required annually.

Respiratory Protection Program

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:

- Hazard assessments are conducted whenever:
  - A new product is brought into use,
  - A work process changes, or
  - A new work process is adopted.

  The supervisor may contact the campus EH&S to assist with conducting hazard assessments. See also *SPPM* 3.10.
- Employees have access to a copy of the written respiratory protection program at all times.

  Supervisors may contact the campus EH&S to obtain copies of the written respiratory protection program.
- Employees wear respirators when necessary.
- 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 receive annual respirator training. Respirator training must include:
  - Pre-use inspection criteria;
  - Proper use;
  - Cleaning; and
  - Storage.
- Employees are medically cleared to use a respirator and their medical clearance is current.

Respiratory Protection Program

Supervisor (cont.)

- Employees use respirators only for those tasks specified in the respirator authorization forms provided by the campus 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 a reusable respirator after every use.
- Storing the respirator in a sealed container or bag to prevent damage or deformation.
- Storing the respirator in a location preferably free of potential contaminants and with minimal exposure to ultraviolet light.
- 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.

  NOTE: The requirement to trim facial hair does not apply to use of loose-fitting PAPRs.
- Using a respirator **only** for tasks that the unit has identified to the campus EH&S and that campus EH&S has documented on the employee's respirator authorization form.
- Receiving an annual fit test and training from the campus EH&S.

Campus EH&S

The campus EH&S departments manage the University's respiratory protection program. For further information and assistance, contact:

- WSU Pullman EH&S: telephone 509-335-3041
- WSU Spokane EH&S: telephone 509-358-7621

  WSU Spokane EH&S also provides information and assistance to WSU Health Sciences—Yakima (which includes College of Nursing—Yakima and College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences—Yakima).

Respiratory Protection Program

Campus EH&S (cont.)

- WSU Tri-Cities EH&S: telephone 509-372-7163
- WSU Vancouver EH&S: telephone 360-546-9706

Personnel at WSU locations not listed above may contact WSU Pullman EH&S for further information and assistance.

EH&S industrial hygienists administer the University's respiratory protection program at each campus. Pullman EH&S administers the respiratory protection program for WSU locations not identified above. Respiratory Protection Program Administrators are responsible for:

- Assisting with evaluating identified respiratory hazards.
- Assisting with ongoing evaluations of work tasks and environments upon request.
- Training employees and supervisors.
- Determining the appropriate respirator for each individual and task.
- Fit-testing employees and supervisors or arranging for fit-testing services. (See Fit-Test and Training.)
- Supporting the collection of air samples as needed.
- Periodically evaluating the University's respiratory protection program to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources are available at the EH&S Respiratory Protection website:

ehs.wsu.edu/respiratory-protection/