Respiratory Protection

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Authority: Chancellor

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Related Policies: Respiratory Protection Training

Additional Resources: OSHA

NCDOL

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose: To ensure the safety of employees or students working with airborne contaminants in areas where engineering and work practice controls are not feasible, fully effective, or under development. To ensure that respiratory protection is provided, used and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition.

2. Responsibility

2.1. The Department:

2.1.1. The Department is responsible for identifying employees who may need to work in locations where hazardous airborne contaminants that cannot be controlled by mechanical means exist and for referring those employees to Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) for inclusion in the Respiratory Protection Training program.

2.1.2. Departments are responsible for assuring that employees wear and maintain assigned respirators appropriately.

2.1.3. The department is responsible for the cost of permanently assigned respirators, replacement parts and maintenance supplies.

2.2. Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S):

2.2.1. EH&S will assist departments in the assessment of inhalation hazards and selection of appropriate respiratory protection.

2.2.2. EH&S is responsible for respirator selection, respiratory protection training and annual fit testing. When no longer in use, all respiratory protection equipment becomes the property of EH&S.

2.3. Prospective Health:

2.3.1. Prospective Health is responsible for medical evaluation and maintenance of medical and fit test records of prospective respirator users.

2.3.2. Prospective Health also evaluates and fit tests employees with respirators for use with infectious agents.

2.4. Employees:

2.4.1. Employees have the responsibility to wear their respirator when required and in a manner in which they were trained.

2.4.1.1. They must care for and maintain their respirators as instructed, and store them in a clean and sanitary location.

2.4.1.2. If the respirator no longer fits well, employees must request a new one that fits properly.

2.4.2. Employees should inform their supervisor or EH&S of any respiratory hazards that are not adequately addressed in the workplace as well as any other concerns they have regarding the respiratory protection program.

2.4.3. Employees must use respiratory protection in accordance with the instructions and training provided and only when the use has been

approved by EH&S.

3. Procedure

3.1. The department should prepare and maintain a hazard assessment report for personal protective equipment and a copy should be forwarded to EH&S.

3.2. Where respiratory protection is indicated, the department contacts EH&S for confirmation of assessment and assistance in the identification of the appropriate respirator.

3.3. The department assures that the prospective respirator user completes a medical evaluation questionnaire (available from EH&S). The questionnaire should be forwarded to Prospective Health for evaluation.

3.4. Upon notification of medical clearance, EH&S will provide appropriate respiratory protection training and a qualitative fit test (for negative pressure respirators).

3.4.1. Prospective Health will complete this step for those employees using respirators with infectious agents.

3.5. Training will include:

3.5.1. What respirator was selected and its intended purpose;

3.5.2. How to properly don, doff, adjust and wear the respirator;

3.5.3. Limitations of the respirator;

3.5.4. Proper care, maintenance and useful life of the respirator;

3.5.5. How to perform negative and positive fit checks.

3.6 All training shall be documented by EH&S or PH as appropriate.

3.7 Respirators must be inspected before each use, cleaned and stored in a closed airtight storage bag on a flat surface out of direct sunlight, and maintained at regular intervals.

3.8 Contaminated personal protective equipment which cannot be

decontaminated ,and must be properly discarded.

3.9 Periodic medical evaluations are required only when:

3.9.1 An employee reports medical signs/symptoms related to inability to use respirator;

3.9.2 Observations made during fit testing/program evaluation indicate a need for reevaluation;

3.9.3 A change occurs in workplace conditions that may result in a substantial increase in the physiological burden on the employee.

3.10 Training and fit testing must be conducted at least annually.

3.11 The department must notify EH&S when an employee is removed from the respiratory protection program.

3.12 Non-disposable respirators must be taken out of service until EH&S re-issues it to another employee.

3.13 Damaged or obsolete respirators must be destroyed or rendered useless to prevent unauthorized use.