Medical Clearance

There are several options for completing medical clearance including the following:

- Complete the Medical Clearance Questionnaire and have reviewed by physician. He/she should provide individual with a statement on letterhead or prescription that they are medically cleared to use a full face air purifying respirator. The original document should be kept with the fumigant management plan but will need to be shown to the individual completing fit testing. They may or may not want a copy for their records. With this option, the physician determines how often you repeat clearance.

- Sign up to manage medical clearances on-line at either http://www.ei1.com/oh/respiratorassessor/or www.respexam.com; in each of these systems respirator use conditions and information for individuals needing to complete on-line clearance will need to be set up. The systems will ask questions like type of respirator (i.e., full face air purifying), maximum length of wear, weather conditions (i.e., heat, humidity), etc.

  Once conditions have been set, authorization will be received from the system for ‘employees’ to complete the questionnaire. Once questionnaire has been completed, it will be reviewed by the company’s physician and notification will be sent (with Assessor it will be an email; with RespExam, it will be immediate) that clearances have been approved. Clearances will need to be printed out and again, original should be kept with fumigant management plan and a copy provided at time of fit testing.

  Check with vendor for cost.

  For technical assistance with the EI Assessor call the EI group in Morrisville and ask for Adam Underwood or George Elderbaum at 919.657.7500 or 1.800.717.3472

  For technical assistance with the 3M RespExam, call 1-800-383-3393. 3M also has an on-line tutorial http://www.respexam.com/media/training/

  The initial steps for set up on line are a little cumbersome but once done the first time the process will not have to be repeated. Farms will be able to log on and complete questionnaires as needed on an annual or semi – annual basis (depends on company – with EI annually; with 3M you can set for annually or bi-annually.

- Locate a healthcare provider or occupational health company that will do both medical clearance and fit testing (ex. EI group, Occumed, Henderson & Associates, Mission Hospital)
How Often should Medical Clearance be Completed?

The medical exam does not have to be repeated annually but must be repeated if only in the following situations:

- When an employee reports signs or symptoms that are related to the ability to use a respirator.
- If a physician or other licensed health care professional, supervisor, respirator program administrator or person conducting a fit test indicates an employee needs to be re-evaluated.
- When a change in workplace conditions (such as temperature, physical work effort or the use of protective clothing) may result in a substantial increase in the physiological burden placed on an employee.

However most companies conducting medical clearance and fit testing require that THE MEDICAL EVALUATION BE CONDUCTED ANNUALLY, INCLUDING THE PULMONARY FUNCTION TEST AND BLOOD PRESSURE MONITORING as a part of their fit testing program. One can see that the rationale behind this as these companies do not know the full medical history of the growers and are only seeing the responses to the medical evaluation questionnaire. They are more comfortable with the demonstrated results of these two tests and there is nothing in regulation to prevent them from being more stringent by performing the medical evaluation including the pulmonary function and blood pressure testing.

Individuals may receive a longer period of medical clearance from their personal physician since they would know their complete medical background.