

VOLUNTARY USE OF RESPIRATORS

Review each of the following points and initial each box. Sign the form and send to EHS.

1. RESPIRATORS AND OSHA REQUIREMENTS

- N-95 respirators are considered respirators according to OSHA. N-95 refers to the NIOSH certification of the filter media that comprises the facepiece. N means that it is not oil resistant and 95 refers to it being 95% effective at filtering particles at the 0.3 micron level. Other NIOSH-certified filtering facepiece media include R95, P95, N100 and P100. Air purifying respirators (APRs) are usually ½ or full face respirators that remove contaminants from the atmosphere via cartridges or canisters. APRs have the ability to protect against particulates, vapors and gases, or a combination of both.
- Voluntary use is defined as use for employee comfort purposes only. No hazard exists that requires use of a respirator and the use of the respirator does not produce any additional hazard. All voluntary respirator users must be medically evaluated prior to respirator use. Medical evaluation can be in the form of a medical questionnaire review. Please contact Environmental Health and Safety for the appropriate forms. Employers (i.e. departments) are not responsible for fees associated with voluntary respirator user medical evaluations.
- If an employee is required to wear a respirator (to protect against a respiratory hazard or as required by the employer), full compliance with the University's Respiratory Protection Program is required, which includes a triennial medical evaluation in the form of a questionnaire review, annual respirator training, and annual respirator fit testing.
- OSHA requires that all employees voluntarily wearing respirators receive basic information as provided in Appendix D of their Respirator Standard, 1910.134 (which is found at the end of this document). – **Signature on this training form certifies receipt and understanding of 1910.134 Appendix D.**

2. HOW TO USE AND WEAR A RESPIRATOR

- Inspect respirators prior to use, including new units out of the box. Check for rips and tears. Make sure straps are securely attached, nose piece is attached properly, and that no obvious defects exist.
- Proper use of the respirator is important. Without it, the respirator is ineffective against the workplace contaminants. Follow manufacturers' instructions for use. – **Review manufacturer's instructions.**
- Beards and other facial hair negate the effectiveness of the respirator because they prevent an adequate seal between the respirator and the face. Skin afflictions, such as dermatitis, or scars, could affect the ability to produce a seal.
- User seal checks confirm that an adequate seal with the face is achieved when the mask is applied. User seal checks should be done every time the mask is put on and every time it is re-adjusted on the face. – **Review manufacturer's instructions for conducting user seal checks.**

3. LIMITATIONS OF PPE

- Respirators are only useful for specific air contaminants in which they are designed. Respirators are designed to protect only against specific types of substances, in certain concentrations, and must be matched to the user, job, and contaminant. They are not to be used in oxygen-deficient atmospheres or atmospheres that contain hazards that are immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH). Respirators will not provide adequate protection if a good seal with the face is not achieved.

4. CARE, MAINTENANCE, USEFUL LIFE AND DISPOSAL OF PPE

- N-95 respirators are considered disposable PPE. They cannot be cleaned, especially when they become wet or soiled. They cannot be shared with other employees. Half and full face air purifying respirators should be cleaned after each use and as often as necessary to provide sanitary conditions. Respirators must be inspected prior to and after each use. Promptly remove damaged or defective respirators and discard them or have them repaired.
- Respirators should be stored in a clean, dry location and protected from sunlight, chemicals, water, extreme temperatures, and physical damage.
- Respirators can only be used in conjunction with a written respiratory protection program. The University's Respiratory Protection Program can be found at:
<http://ehs.illinoisstate.edu/services/occupational/respiratory.shtml>

Employee Name: _____ Dept.: _____ Phone: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard, 29CFR1910.134

Appendix D to Sec. 1910.134 (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

Send copies of completed forms to Environmental Health and Safety:

Campus Box 1320 or Fax 438-3086 or sysevenvironmental@Exchange.ilstu.edu