



Angelo State University
Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 34.05: Respiratory Protection Program

DATE: March 21, 2017

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to establish the respiratory protection program and ensure the protection of all employees who are required to wear a respirator while performing their duties.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in March every four years, or as needed, by the director of risk and emergency management with recommended revisions forwarded through the vice president for finance and administration to the president by April 15 of the same year.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Intent

The employee protection will be accomplished by complying with guidance in 29 CFR 1910.134 and 1926.103, *Respiratory Protection Standard*, NIOSH *Guide to Industrial Respiratory Protection*, and NIOSH *Guide to the Selection and Use of Particulate Respirators* (Certified under 42 CFR 84). No employee will be given a respirator or instructed to use one without approval from the Office of Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management (EHSRM). Respirators shall be used only where engineering or administrative controls are not practical or while engineering controls are being installed.

2. Responsibilities

The EHSRM office is the authority for approving respirators and monitoring their use. EHSRM will maintain copies of medical qualification statements, training, and fit testing as prescribed by OSHA. Supervisors and users of respirators in each department will be responsible for following this OP and guidance provided by EHSRM in the written respiratory protection program that details the specifics of respirator use, maintenance, cleaning, and storage. Required respirators shall be provided at no cost to the employee.

3. Training

All employees required to wear a respirator will be trained annually in the proper use and limitations of the equipment. The training will be coordinated by EHSRM. At the time of initial training, each respirator user will be provided basic information regarding respiratory protection. The employee must be given time to handle the respirator and wear it in a normal air situation. He/she must adjust the equipment until it is comfortable and wear the mask for at least five minutes before a fit check is performed. Those employees required to wear respirators in IDLH (immediately dangerous to life or health) atmospheres shall be trained in rescue procedures.

Initial and annual training will be conducted in accordance with the written respiratory protection program.

4. Fit Testing

Fit testing will be facilitated by EHSRM to ensure all employees required to wear respirators have equipment that fits and functions properly. This test will be performed on a yearly basis and accomplished as prescribed in the written respiratory protection program.

5. Medical Examinations

Persons assigned to tasks that require wearing a respirator must be physically able to perform the work while using the respirator. Every year, each respirator wearer must obtain a physician's statement of medical qualification to wear a respirator. This may be accomplished through a medical examination or use of the questionnaire in CFR 29, Part 1910, Subpart I, 134, Appendix C, which is then evaluated by a physician or other licensed health care professional. The supervisor will be responsible for ensuring each employee has this statement and brings a copy to the fit test procedure when a new physician's statement is received. No employee will be approved or fit tested for respirator use by EHSRM without a current physician's statement that he/she is medically qualified to perform his/her duties while wearing a respirator. Medical approval is required prior to wearing a respirator, even for training purposes.

6. Inspection, Cleaning, Maintaining, and Storage

- a. All respirators must be inspected for wear and deterioration of their components before and after each use. Special attention should be given to rubber, silicone, or plastic parts that can deteriorate. The face piece, especially the sealing surface, headband, valves, and filters, must be in good condition. All self-contained breathing apparatus must be inspected at least monthly. Air cylinders must be fully charged at all times. Regulators and warning devices must be checked to ensure their proper function. Records must be kept of inspection dates and findings. Cylinders may only be filled with air that meets the standards for grade D medical or breathing air. Gaskets, seals, fittings, and regulators shall be inspected on all powered air-purifying respirators (PAPR) and air-line respirators before and after each use.
- b. Chemical cartridges and filters shall be replaced at least every 20 hours of service or sooner if needed. Respirator repairs must be made only by experienced persons and using only parts from the same manufacturer specifically for that respirator model. Respirators shall be cleaned after each use. This can be done with towelettes or cleaning solution designed for that purpose. In addition to this cleaning, respirators shall be disassembled, thoroughly cleaned, and sanitized at least twice a year (more often if used in very dirty environments). This will prolong the life of the respirator and lessen the chances of constant re-infection if the employee contracts a cold or other virus. The cleaning and sanitizing shall be accomplished as prescribed in the written respiratory protection program. Never use alcohol on respirators. BZK is an acceptable sanitizer.
- c. Respirators must be stored in a manner to protect against dust, sunlight, extreme heat or cold, excessive moisture, or damaging chemicals. A heavy-duty resealable plastic bag is recommended for respirator storage. Store the respirator in a position to prevent mechanical damage from occurring. Respirators shall be stored so that face pieces and

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exhalation valves rest in a normal position to prevent the mask from becoming deformed. Respirators shall never be hung from their straps or stored in a contaminated environment.

7. Respirator Use and Approval

Only respirators approved and fit tested by EHSRM will be used at the university. All respirators, other than those for emergency use, will be issued on an individual basis. No respirators will be shared among employees. As part of the fit test, EHSRM will provide specific information about the manufacturer's respirator, model, size, and cartridges the employee is authorized to wear. This combination of equipment will be selected to protect the employee from the hazards identified in his/her work environment. It should never be used as protection against any other hazards. If an employee encounters new or unusual hazards, he/she should contact EHSRM for advice concerning protection from those hazards. The employee should not assume his/her respirator provides protection. The selection of respiratory protection equipment will be based on the characteristics of the hazardous substance, the concentration present, and the limitations of the respiratory protection equipment itself.

8. Use of Respirators by Students

Student environments shall normally be engineered to not require the use of respirators. All student respirator use shall be coordinated through EHSRM on a case-by-case basis. The respiratory protection principles for employees shall also apply to students.