**Respiratory Protection Program**

**Note:**

**This is a general template. Update to fit your institution’s needs. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been used as a reference for this document’s creation. OSHA is a regulatory body in the United States; therefore, it is imperative that applicable regulations for your country are incorporated into this document. Please update the template with your applicable regulatory body during customization.**

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# Introduction

Provide a general introduction that gives background on your institution and individuals in charge and that describes the purpose of the plan.

# Important Contact Information

Insert important contact information for key individuals and departments.

# Purpose

**[INSTIUTION NAME]** has determined that individuals have the potential to be exposed to airborne diseases in the laboratory or clinical setting. The purpose of this program is to ensure a framework is in place to ensure that proper procedures and testing are carried out to ensure that at-risk individuals are protected from airborne diseases. While engineering and administrative controls are in place, it has been deemed necessary that some individuals will still need to use respiratory protection to ensure the safest work environment possible.

Give any additional background/information as to why your institution has determined that certain individuals may be at-risk for exposure to airborne contaminants.

# Scope and Application

This program applies to all individuals who are required to wear respirators to perform their daily job duties as determined by a risk assessment. Subsequently, this plan also applies to an individual that may wish to voluntarily wear a respirator. Note surgical masks do not fall under this plan. Whether the use of a respirator is required, or voluntary, **[INSERT INSTITUTION NAME]** will ensure that a copy of Appendix D (from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA]) is provided to the individual.

# Responsibilities

## Program Administrator

This individual is responsible for administering the program. Duties may include:

* Assist in the selection of respiratory protection options based on the situation
* Identify locations, duties, operations that require respiratory protection
* Training
* Fit testing procedures
* Record maintenance
* Periodic program evaluation
* Setting up medical evaluation processes
* Add additional duties here

## Supervisor

This individual is responsible for ensuring the program is followed and understood by persons covered by the program. Duties may include:

* Ensure individuals have received training, medical evaluation, and monitor proper respirator use
* Ensure stock of respirators is available to individuals required to use one
* Help identify situations where respiratory protection may be needed
* Ensure proper respirator maintenance
* Coordinate with Program Administrator as needed
* Address individual concerns

## Individual (Respirator Wearer)

Individuals are responsible for:

* Proper use of a respirator
* Proper maintenance of their respirator
* Notify their supervisor of any issues with their respirator or its use
* Notify their supervisor if another medical evaluation is needed

# Program Components

## Hazard Assessment and Selection of a Respirator

### Hazard Assessment and Selection of a Respirator

The Program Administrator will conduct hazard evaluations and recommend respirators based upon the hazard present. Hazard assessments will be revised, as necessary. If any individual feels current recommendations are inadequate, he/she should inform their supervisor/program administrator.

Insert list of jobs/tasks/locations where respirators are required. Indicate the type of respirator.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Job/Task/Location** | **Type of Respirator Required** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

### Voluntary Use of a Respirator

**[INSERT INSTITUTION NAME]** allows individuals to voluntarily use respiratory protection in a certain situation (note the situations here). For voluntary use, **[INSERT INSTITUTION NAME]** will:

* Allow voluntary respirator for use on a case-specific basis. This will be determined by the Program Administrator.
* If voluntary use is approved, the individual will be given a copy of Appendix D from OSHA for voluntary use guidance and medical evaluation to ensure that the use of a respirator is not medically contraindicated.

### Medical Evaluation

Individuals who are required to or voluntarily opt to wear a respiratory must undergo a medical evaluation prior to respirator use. If a medical evaluation is refused, that individual will not be allowed to wear a respirator.

The licensed health care provider will provide the medical evaluations. The following will be conducted.

* Appendix C of OSHA’s Respiratory Protection Standard will be used as guidance: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134AppC>
* The Program Administrator or assigned healthcare provider will provide each individual requiring a medical evaluation with a copy of this questionnaire.

Individuals will:

* Be allowed to complete the questionnaire on company time.
* Be afforded follow-up medical examinations as deemed necessary.
* If requested, be afforded the opportunity to speak with a healthcare provider about their medical evaluation.

After an individual has received clearance to wear a respirator, if any of the below situations occur, a follow-up medical evaluation should be considered:

* Individual notes shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness, or wheezing while wearing the respirator.
* The healthcare provider deems an individual needs a re-evaluation.
* Any observation made during periodic assessments, fit testing, or self-reporting to a supervisor of issues.

Insert any additional information on how medical evaluations will be carried out at your institution.

### Fit Testing

Individuals required to wear a tight-fitting respirator must be fit tested before use, annually, and any change to the individual’s physical self that could affect the fit of the assigned respirator. Examples include change in facial composition due to weight loss/gain, extensive dental work that may result in dimensional facial changes.

Individuals must be fit tested with the exact model of respirator that they will be required to wear (make, model, size). Fit testing will be carried out according to Appendix A from OSHA: [1910.134 App A - Fit Testing Procedures (Mandatory). | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (osha.gov)](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134AppA)

### Respirator Use and Responsibilities

Any individual wearing a respirator agrees to and is responsible for the following:

* Respirators must be properly used and maintained as outline by this program and provided training.
* Tight fitting respirators will not be worn if the individual has any condition that contraindicates use, i.e., facial hair, scars, change in facial composition (if an individual has not been re-fit tested), or anything that would affect a proper seal.
* Add additional items, as necessary.

### Emergency Procedures

For any respiratory issue or malfunction (e.g., breakthrough, facepiece leakage, or improperly working valve in valve models), the wearer must immediately cease use of the respirator and inform their supervisor of the issue. The supervisor must ensure the individual’s respirator is properly repaired or replaced.

### Cleaning, Maintenance, and Training

### Cleaning

Reusable respirators must be routinely cleaned and disinfected. All individuals will follow the applicable cleaning procedures set forth in Appendix B of the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard: [1910.134 App B-2 - Respirator Cleaning Procedures (Mandatory). | Occupational Safety and Health Administration (osha.gov)](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134AppB2)

### Maintenance

* Individuals are responsible for maintaining their respirators and ensuring that they are functioning properly prior to use.
* Respirators should be visually inspected for defects and cleanliness prior to each use. Any worn or broken parts must be replaced before use.
* Only parts and repairs as outlined per the manufacturer of the respirator can be addressed by an individual.
* Below is a simple checklist to be used during the inspection of a respirator:
  + Facepiece:
    - Cracks, tears, or holes
    - Facemask distortion
    - Cracked or loose lenses/face shield
  + Valves:
    - Residue or dirt
    - Cracks or tears in valve material
  + Head straps:
    - Breaks or tears
    - Broken buckles
  + Filters/Cartridges:
    - Approval designation
    - Gaskets
    - Cracks or dents in housing
    - Proper cartridge for hazard
* Individuals must store their respirators in a clean, dry area and in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations in the original manufacturer’s packaging.
* Any damaged respirator must be taken out of rotation and use immediately and the supervisor.
* Supervisors will refer all damaged/defective to the Program Administrator for evaluation and final disposition.

### Training

* Training will be provided by the Program Administrator.
* Individuals must be trained prior to using a respirator.
* The training must be comprehensive, easy to understand, and must occur annually.
* Supervisors will provide a copy of Appendix D to individuals who are voluntarily wearing a respirator.
* Supervisors will ensure individuals using a respirator can readily demonstrate working knowledge the following:
  + The necessity of a respirator inclusive of proper fit, usage, and maintenance.
  + Limitations and capabilities of the respirator they are required to wear.
  + Emergency procedures, i.e., use in an emergency situation and malfunction situation.
  + Individual must know how to properly inspect, don/doff, use, and check the seals of the respirator.
  + Maintenance and storage procedures for their respirator.
  + Knowledge of how to recognize physical signs and symptoms that may prevent effective use of a respirator, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, etc.
  + Knowledge of the Respiratory Protection Standard and institutional plan.

Retraining shall be administered annually and when the following situations occur:

* Changes in the workplace or the type of respirator renders previous training obsolete.
* Inadequacies in the individual’s knowledge or use of the respirator indicates that the worker has not retained the requisite understanding or skill.
* Any other situation that arises in which retraining appears necessary to ensure safe respirator use.

# Evaluation of the Program

The Program Administrator will periodically evaluate the workplace and plan to ensure that no updates are needed and that the plan is being properly adhered to. The periodic evaluation should include:

* Meetings with individuals who wear respirators
* Meetings with supervisors
* Site inspections (e.g., laboratory, clinic, another area)
* Record review
* Documentation and actions taken for any issues noted during evaluations

# Recordkeeping

The items listed below should be maintained for records:

* An accessible copy of the most recent version of the Respiratory Protection Plan available for any individual to review.
* Fit test records
* Medical evaluation records (Note: personal medical information is confidential, and it is helpful to have a short form with either approved/not approved from the evaluating medical provider if actual evaluations will not be securely stored).
* Training materials

# References

1. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Respiratory Protection Standard CFR 1910.134. <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134>

# Appendix D from OSHA

OSHA FORM FOR **VOLUNTARY RESPIRATOR USE** Appendix D to Sec. 1910.134.

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 exposure 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 respirator’s 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 you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_