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Respiratory Protection Program | Safety Committee

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RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM

The use of respiratory protection may be required as a result of exposure to harmful particulates, fumes, gaseous vapors, and other hazardous airborne substances. In such circumstances, a respirator is assigned when other protective measures either fail or are yet to be implemented. Respirators may also be assigned to meet regulatory mandates, e.g. asbestos operations.

Employees assigned a respirator must be enrolled in and must meet all the requirements of Jacksonville State University's Respiratory Protection Program. Those employees utilizing a respirator outside of the program run the risk of not being fully protected or worse, putting themselves directly in harm's way.

All elements of the Respiratory Protection Program are managed through University Safety. Such elements include:

- **Hazard Assessment.** When the use of respiratory protection is indicated, the hazard or hazardous substance an employee is exposed to must be fully characterized. The process will help ensure alternative measures have been fully reviewed and, in the event a respirator is needed, the best respirator is selected.
- **Respiratory Protection Selection.** Respirators must be selected by University Safety. Respirators will be selected with, careful consideration to 1) qualitative and quantitative contaminant evaluations, 2) the work/task processes and conditions, 3) care and maintenance requirements, and 4) employee comfort.
- **Medical Management.** Employees must complete medical surveillance requirements before the initial fit test and periodically thereafter. At a minimum, medical surveillance will include a review of both the questionnaire and the pulmonary function test by a designated medical authority. In addition, medical surveillance for specific contaminants, or work conditions may also be required.

- **Training.** User training must be conducted before respiratory protection is used. Thereafter training is an annual requirement for as long as the employee is enrolled in the program.
- **Fit-Testing.** When an employee is initially assigned a respirator, they must be fit tested to determine which respirator will be assigned to them. Fit-testing will be conducted only after the employee is medically cleared and has conducted the required training. Thereafter fit testing is an annual requirement for as long as the employee is assigned a respiratory.
- **Equipment Inspection, Maintenance and Care.** Equipment will be inspected by University Safety at least once annually during scheduled user training and fit-testing. Recommendations for equipment maintenance, care or replacement will be made at that time. Departments are responsible for outlining additional inspection, maintenance and care requirements for those employees assign such protection within their area of responsibility.
- **Record-keeping.** Except for medical records, all recordkeeping will be maintained by University Safety. In lieu of actual medical records, University Safety will maintain the medical clearance form as provided by the medical authority. Records will be maintained in accordance with the regulatory mandates and the University's policies.
- **Voluntary Program.** When the determination has been made that respiratory protection is not required or necessary for their employment, an employee still has the right to wear a personal respirator once the individual signs a release form.

Reference

- 29 CFR 1910.134 Respiratory Protection Standard