Acadia INSURANCE
a Berkley Company

Respiratory Protection

The primary objective in an occupational setting is to eliminate atmospheric contamination through engineering controls, such as ventilation or enclosures, when feasible. When engineering measures cannot be completed, respiratory protection should be implemented to reduce the risk of exposure to employees. Fumes, gases, mists, dusts, vapors, and sprays are a few contaminants that can be inhaled that could cause an exposure.

There are two main types of respiratory protection:

- **Air purifying respirators (APRs)** filter air through the mask to remove the contaminants prior to breathing them in. This can be done by the mask itself, or for items such as gasses or vapors, a canister can be added to absorb the material. These masks come in a few different forms:
    - Quarter mask - covering the mouth and nose
    - Half mask - covering half of the face from nose to chin
    - Full face - covering from above the eyes to below the chin

These masks are tight fitting and would require fit testing. Fit testing is when the exact mask someone will be using is fitted to their face by a professional to ensure the type of respirator fits their face correctly and has a good enough seal to keep out contaminants. This fit test should be conducted at least every 12 months.

- **Supplied air respirators (SARs)** are respirators that supply clean air from a compressed air tank. There are a few different options for this type of respirator:
    - A helmet that is hooked to the airline so that it is constantly being fed clean air
    - A suit that is put on with a helmet where the air is again being fed throughout circulating the clean air

SARs are loose-fitting and take clean air from a tank source and use that to prevent contamination or exposure. This option is used in more serious atmospheric conditions.

Respirator Use and Care

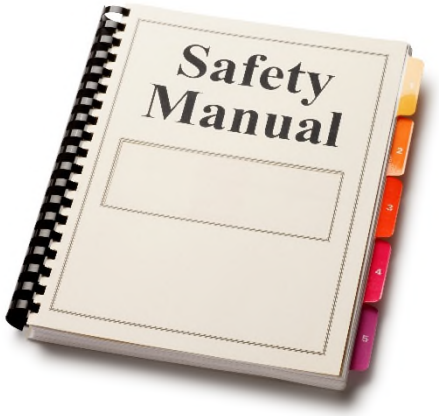
The correct respirator should be chosen based on the type of hazard that is present and must be NIOSH certified. Each employee should be provided with their own respirator. The following steps should be conducted by each employee to ensure that their respirator will be fully functional when needed:

- Store respirators in a clean, dry place at all times
- Inspect upon each use to ensure there are no defects with the respirator
- Disinfect and clean regularly or for emergency situations after every use
- If respirator is required to be fit to the face, facial hair should be prohibited to ensure there is a tight seal from the respirator to the face
- Fit testing should be conducted at least every 12 months to ensure that the type and style of respirator still provides adequate protection

Written Respiratory Protection Program

When a respirator is used in the workplace, a written Respiratory Protection Program should be established and implemented by all involved parties. The written program should include the following elements at a minimum:

- The purpose of the program
- Hazard assessments
- Employee responsibilities and requirements
- Employer and health care professionals contact information
- Medical evaluation requirements
- Respirator selection criteria
- Respirator use guidelines
- Procedures for cleaning, storing, maintaining, inspecting, and discarding respirators
- Training and testing requirements
- Record keeping requirements



The written Respiratory Protection Program should act as a roadmap to the employee on preventing airborne occupational diseases. Acadia has resources available to assist with employee trainings and safety policies through the Risk Management Center. For more information regarding respiratory protection safety resources, please contact Acadia's Virtual Loss Control Team at 207-874-5701 or virtuallc@acadia-ins.com.

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