

## Respirator Use

### 1. General

The intent of this written program is to define Rainier School District's use of respirators for personal protection against airborne contaminants. The regulations contained herein are not optional for the employee. To comply with the Occupations Health Regulations of the Oregon Safe Employment Act, the district considers this policy mandatory and a condition of employment for affected individuals.

### 2. Availability of Respirators

Each employee that requires a respirator will be issued one at the district's expense with replacement parts, cartridges, and filters upon request.

### 3. Selection of Respirators

Only NIOSH/MSHA approved respirators will be chosen for use in the program. The choice between respirators is dependent upon the airborne contaminant present, the HAZARDOUS operation performed, and on the basis of comfort and ease of obtaining a proper individual fit. The district will provide these respirators. The useful life of each respirator will depend mainly on the employee's job duties and the actual time the unit is in use.

### 4. Use of Respirators

Each employee that is required to use a respirator will wear an approved respirator, properly fitted, at all times while performing an operation defined as hazardous; or in the immediate area (within 10 feet) for an extended period of time (more than 5 minutes) where another employee is performing a HAZARDOUS operation<sup>1</sup>.

### 5. Training of Employees

Each respirator user will be shown and trained how to use and maintain the respirator based on this respirator use and maintenance program. This training will be facilitated by the district appointed safety officer.

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<sup>1</sup>"Hazardous operation" is an operation which involves dust, mists or fumes which could be hazardous to the health of the employee.

A record will be kept of those employees who have been trained (See form EBBC-AR(2)). Each user must have understood and be able to apply the contents of this respirator program in the daily use, care and safekeeping of the respirators.

To insure the availability of this respirator program at all times, copies of the same shall be distributed as follows:

- a. Kept in the facilities office file.
- b. Provided to respirator user(s) as necessary.

## 6. Fitting of Respirators

Proper fitting of respirators is essential if employees are to receive the protection for which this program is designed. Air which passes around the edges of the respirator, rather than through it, is not filtered air. In order to ensure a good face seal, the following rules must be observed:

- a. The respirator and straps must be in place and worn in the appropriate position. To adjust head bands, pull the free ends tight until a comfortable fit is obtained. All straps shall be secure.
- b. To adjust face piece properly, simply position chin firmly in the chin cup and manually shift rubber mask until the most comfortable position is located. Make final adjustments in the head band and do not break the nasal seal. Modification in the respirator or straps shall not be made.
- c. Proper fit must be checked each time the respirator is worn according to the manufacturer's instructions. Respirators shall not be worn when projections under the face piece prevent a good face seal. Note: Such conditions may be a growth of beard, sideburns, temple pieces on glasses or skull cap that projects under the face piece.
- d. The fitted respirator must be tested using the appropriate qualitative fit tests. For example, isoamyl acetate should be used to check respirator fit when using organic vapor respirators by determining if the wearer can detect the "banana oil" odor. Irritant fume tests can be used with particulate respirators to ensure proper fit.

In the event an employee is unable to obtain a satisfactory fit with the type of respirator furnished, the employer must make efforts to correct the problem.

## 7. Maintenance of Respirators

Respirators should be cleaned after each day's use and placed in a plastic bag and stored in the container provided for this purpose (Zip-Lock bags or clean coffee can). Respirators shall not be hung on nails on the wall. When in continual use, respirators should be completely cleaned and disinfected as needed by carrying out the following procedures:

- a. Remove the air-purifying elements from the respirator. Air purifying elements must never be washed and disinfected.
- b. Immerse the respirator in a warm (e.g. 140 -160 F°) aqueous solution of a germicidal detergent. The respirator face piece and parts may be scrubbed gently with a cloth or soft brush. Make sure that all foreign matter is removed from all surfaces of the rubber exhalation valve flap and plastic exhalation valve seats.

- c. After washing and disinfecting the respirator, rinse the same with clean, warm (e.g. 140 -160 F°) water and then allow the respirator to dry.
- d. After the respirator is dry, attach the air-purifying elements.
- e. Store the respirator in the container provided for the purpose.

Any malfunction on the respirator shall be reported to the Building Safety officer and replacement parts will be available from the facilities office.

After inspection, cleaning and necessary repair, or after each day's use, the respirator shall be stored in the plastic bag and in the container provided for the purpose. In storing the respirator, the face piece and exhalation must be in a normal position so as to prevent the abnormal set of elastomer parts during storage.

Each worker assigned to use a respirator shall maintain and routinely inspect it before and after each use. Respirators will be inspected monthly by the Building Safety officer to assure that they are kept clean and in satisfactory working condition. Respirator inspection shall include:

- a. Tightness of connections;
- b. Condition of face piece;
- c. Condition of head bands;
- d. Conditions of cartridges;
- e. Condition of valves;
- f. Rubber or elastomer for pliability;
- g. Rubber or elastomer for deterioration.

NOTE: Stretching and manipulating rubber or elastomer parts with a massaging action will keep them pliable and flexible and prevent them from taking a set during storage. Worn out parts will be replaced immediately.

8. The district will monitor the effectiveness of this program by:
  - a. Frequent unscheduled observation of employee activities to confirm proper respirator use.
  - b. Observation of and discussion with new employees to confirm proper training has been carried out.
  - c. Periodic discussion with building safety officer and general maintenance personnel during appropriate scheduled meetings.