

**PROVIDENCE COLLEGE**

**RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Providence College Respiratory Protection Program sets forth the policy for Providence College employees that have the potential to be exposed to hazardous airborne contaminants. This Program has been established in accordance with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 “Respiratory Protection”.

## **2. SCOPE**

It is the policy of Providence College to provide its employees with a safe and healthful work environment. It is recognized that certain work duties may require employees to be subjected to airborne contaminants. It is the intent of Providence College to protect those employees from these potential exposures through the administration of the respiratory protection practices as defined in this plan.

## **3. ROLES and RESPOSIBILITIES**

- Environmental, Health and Safety

EH&S is responsible for the administration of the respiratory protection program, which includes determining if there is a need for respiratory protection, proper respirator selection, training and fit testing. EH&S also maintains all non-medical records pertaining to this program. An EH&S administrator provides guidance and oversight over all aspects of the respiratory protection program.

- Departments

Departments are responsible for assisting EH&S in identifying employees who may be required to wear a respirator based on their work tasks and potentially hazardous airborne contaminants. They shall also ensure that employees take required training, and provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and other exposure controls when appropriate.

- Employees

Affected employees, herein called respirator wearers, shall participate in obtaining a medical clearance to wear a respirator, being fit tested and receiving training.

The respirator wearer shall use the respirator when required by the specified work activity and ensure that the respirator is cleaned, stored and maintained according to the provisions of this program.

#### 4. PROCEDURES

If Environmental, Health and Safety suspects that a specific job task might require the use of a respiratory protective device, a comprehensive workplace review will be conducted. This assessment may include air monitoring to assess employee exposures to airborne contaminants. If an unsafe exposure situation exists, the feasibility of engineering or administrative controls will be considered first. If these preferred methods of controlling exposure are not feasible, the respiratory protection program will be implemented as described below.

- Medical Evaluations

The use of a respirator places unusual stress on the wearer to the extent that employees entering this program must be evaluated by a physician or other licensed health care professional. The purpose of the evaluation is to screen employees for pre-existing conditions not conducive to respirator use, confirm that the individual can handle the additional stress caused by the respirator and re-evaluate the wearer periodically for changes in health and abilities.

- Respirator Selection

Respirators will be selected by Environmental, Health and Safety on the basis of hazards and the concentration of the contaminant to which an employee is exposed.

- Fit Testing

All individuals required to use a tight-fitting respirator must undergo qualitative fit-testing to ensure an effective mask-to-face seal. Individuals must be fit-tested using irritant smoke before initial use of their respirators and at least annually thereafter. The Program Administrator performing the fit test will provide the employee with information on the specific manufacturer, model, and size of respirator, along with the type of cartridges needed, if applicable. EH&S shall maintain necessary records of all fit-tests for tight-fitting respirators.

- Training

Employees required to use respirators will receive initial and annual training, which will be coordinated by Environmental, Health and Safety. Training will include the respiratory hazards to which employees are potentially exposed during routine workplace situations. Employees shall receive specific instructions related to the respirator they use and will include putting on and taking off the respirator. The training will also consist of instruction in selection, inspection, use, and maintenance of respirators. Employees must be able to demonstrate knowledge of why the respirator is necessary, how to care for and use the respirator properly, how to recognize when the respirator is not functioning properly, and general requirements of this respiratory protection program.

## 5. VOLUNTARY USE OF RESPIRATORS

The basic advisory information on voluntary, non-required respirators, as presented below is provided via a written handout or verbally by the Program Administrator to employees who choose to wear 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 exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If the College 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 mask 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 that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

All employees are encouraged to contact the Program Administrator immediately if they have

any questions requiring respirator use or proper fit. Appendix A has examples of job descriptions that may require respirator use.

## 6. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The provisions of this Respiratory Protection Program will be evaluated by the Program Administrator annually or whenever site conditions or respiratory protection equipment changes. Any significant alterations to the provisions of this program will be reflected through revisions to this document.

## 7. RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM RULES

Compliance with these written standard operating procedures shall be as follows:

- Respirators shall be selected on the basis of the hazards to which the employee is exposed.
- The user shall be instructed and trained in the proper use of respirators and their limitations.
- Where applicable, respiratory protective equipment will be assigned to individual employees for their exclusive use.
- Respirators shall be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with procedures established through training.
- Respirators shall be stored in convenient, clean, and sanitary locations.
- Respirators used routinely shall be inspected during cleaning.
- Worn or deteriorated parts shall be replaced.
- Regular inspection and evaluation schedules shall be established to determine the continued effectiveness of this program.
- Persons shall not be assigned to tasks or allowed to enter areas which may require the use of respirators until they have completed the required medical evaluations and meet the requirements thereof.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **POTENTIAL AREAS OF CONCERN THAT MAY REQUIRE RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

#### **Arts Department:**

Working with ceramics that may contain silica, breaking clay, glaze mixing, etc.  
Cutting styrofoam, etc.  
Any dry and dusty environments.

#### **Mason:**

Cutting tile, mixing cement, cutting or demolishing concrete, sanding, (or any other dusty environment)

#### **Grounds Department:**

Operating leaf blowers, weed wackers, lawn mowers, or any equipment that creates a dusty environment