

## Respiratory Protection Voluntary Use Requirements

### Information for Supervisors

A supervisor may provide respirators at the request of employees or permit employees to use their own respirators, if the supervisor determines that such respirator use will not in itself create a hazard. If the supervisor determines that any voluntary respirator use is permissible, he/she must provide the respirator users with this information.

**In addition, the supervisor must ensure that any employee using a respirator voluntarily is medically able to use that respirator. An approval letter/form from the employee's physician is required.** Exception: Those employees whose only use of respirators involves the voluntary use of filtering face pieces (dust masks) UNLESS recommended by the manufacturer's instructions.

The supervisor must also ensure that the respirator is cleaned, stored, and maintained so that its use does not present a health hazard to the user.

The employee should send a copy of the physician's approval letter to HR Health and Benefits office (581-2366). They in turn will send a respirator approval form to the employee's supervisor.

**This form and the respirator approval form must be maintained in the employee's training file.**

### Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Appendix D to OSHA 1910.134 (Mandatory)

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 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 respirators 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 that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

Employee's Name

Employee's Signature

Date

Supervisor's Name

Supervisor's Signature

Date