

# RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM

In accordance with [WAC 296-842](#) this program shall apply to all employees of Whitman College who use a respirator on the job, whether required or on a voluntary basis.

The Program Administrator shall be the College's Chemical Hygiene Officer.

## Definitions

- Air-line respirator. An atmosphere-supplying respirator for which breathing air is drawn from a source separate from and not worn by the user, such as:
  - A cylinder or a tank;
  - A compressor in an uncontaminated environment
- Air-purifying respirator (APR). A respirator equipped with an air-purifying element such as a filter, cartridge, or canister, OR having a filtering facepiece, for example, a dust mask.
- Filtering-facepiece respirator. A tight-fitting, half-facepiece, negative-pressure, particulate air-purifying respirator with the facepiece mainly composed of filter material. These respirators do not use cartridges or canisters and may have sealing surfaces composed of rubber, silicone or other plastic-like materials. They are sometimes referred to as "dust masks."
- Immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH). An atmospheric condition that would:
  - Cause an immediate threat to life; or
  - Cause permanent or delayed adverse health effects; or
  - Interfere with an employee's ability to escape
- Licensed health care professional (LHCP). An individual whose legally permitted scope of medical practice allows him or her to provide some or all of the health care services required for respirator users' medical evaluations.
- Loose-fitting facepiece. A respiratory inlet covering that is designed to form a partial seal with the face.
- Oxygen deficient. An atmosphere with an oxygen content below 19.5% by volume.
- Respirator. A type of personal protective equipment designed to protect the wearer from airborne contaminants, oxygen deficiency, or both.
- Respiratory inlet covering. The part of a respirator that forms the protective barrier between the user's respiratory tract and an air-purifying device or breathing air source or both
  - The respiratory inlet covering may be a facepiece, helmet, hood, suit, or mouthpiece respirator with nose clamp
- Voluntary use. Respirator use that is requested by the employee and permitted by the employer when no respiratory hazard exists

## Recordkeeping

Respirator program records

- A written copy of the current respirator program
- Employee current fit test record, if fit testing is conducted, until the next fit test is administered
  - Employee name;
  - Test date;
  - Type of fit-test performed;
  - Description (type, manufacturer, model, style, and size) of the respirator tested;

- Results of fit tests, for example, for quantitative fit tests include the overall fit factor and a print out, or other recording of the test
- Training record including employees' names and the dates trained
- Written recommendations from LHCP(s)

### **General**

Only trained employees having current medical evaluation forms on file with the College shall use a respirator on the job.

Prior to use the College shall conduct an evaluation of job tasks and conditions in accordance with [WAC 296-842-13005](#) to ensure the selected respirator is appropriate.

Only loose fitting face piece respirators may be utilized under the provisions of this program. These include air-line (with hood or helmet) and filtering face piece respirators only. The College shall provide this equipment when required by job conditions. Required equipment shall be provided at no cost to employees. When the job does not require respirator use only filtering face piece respirators may be used voluntarily. Purchase and maintenance of voluntary use equipment is the responsibility of the employee.

Whitman employees shall not enter IDLH areas or where atmospheric hazards exist which exceed the capability of their respirator. Such hazardous atmospheres include but are not limited to those areas where toxic fumes, mists, dusts or vapors are present above the protection factor provided by their respirator.

### **Medical Evaluation**

Medical evaluation by an LHCP for participation in the program shall be provided at no cost to employees.

Employees may perform all program-related activities, including filling out medical evaluation forms and necessary LHCP visits during normal work hours.

Employees must complete and submit a completed Respirator Use Screening Questionnaire [\(make live link to document\)](#) to the program's LHCP – Consult EHS for assistance and for LHCP address and phone number.

Employee [medical](#) and [exposure](#) records, and [analysis](#) of such records shall be retained for the duration of employment plus 30 years.

## **Training**

Employees who use or maintain respirators shall be trained prior to first use, and retrained at least annually (within 12 months of last training)

- Retraining is required within 30 days for any employee who experiences a potential or confirmed exposure to hazardous materials due to misuse of or not using a respirator
- Equipment-specific training is required before first use of new type or model of respirator, or upon introduction of new tasks requiring respirator use

Employees who supervise respirator users or respirator maintenance personnel shall be trained within 10 days of hire/assignment and retrained at least annually (within 12 months of last training)

Initial and new equipment and task training shall consist of two phases

- A classroom session, including a question and answer period; and
- An on-the-job session conducted by the employee's supervisor
  - Supervisors shall
    - Ensure employees understand the hazards associated with each work area where respirators are to be used; and
    - Observe employees performing a task for the first time, and periodically thereafter; and
    - Provide employees feedback on their performance, suggest necessary work practice modifications, and answer employee questions regarding respirator use

Classroom instruction shall cover the following topics and ensure employees have acquired the knowledge and skills required for safe respirator use in their duties:

- Why the respirator is necessary, including information identifying respiratory hazards such as hazardous chemicals, the extent of the employee's exposure, and potential health effects and symptoms
- The respirator's capabilities and limitations, including how the respirator provides protection and why air-purifying respirators cannot be used in oxygen-deficient conditions
- How improper fit, use, or maintenance can compromise the respirator's effectiveness and reliability
- How to properly inspect, put on, seal check, use, and remove the respirator
- How to clean, disinfect, repair, and store the respirator, or how to get this done by someone else
- How to use the respirator effectively in emergency situations; including what to do when a respirator fails
- Medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators such as shortness of breath or dizziness
- General information such as the elements of this program, selecting appropriate respirators, and medical evaluations

Annual retraining shall consist of a classroom session, including a question and answer period

Exemption: This section does not apply to respirators that are voluntarily used. See [WAC 296-842-11005](#) for voluntary use requirements.

## Voluntary Use

The following conditions apply to voluntary use of respirators on the job.

Employees may choose to wear respirators on jobs which do not require respiratory protection. Employees are responsible for supplying their own voluntary use respirators and for complying with the provisions of this program while wearing them on the job.

### **Advisory Information for Employees Who Voluntarily Use Respirators**

- Respirators protect against airborne hazards when properly selected and used. Respirator usage that is required by DOSH or your employer is not voluntary use. With required use, your employer will need to provide further training and meet additional requirements in this chapter. DOSH recommends voluntary use of respirators when exposure to substances is below DOSH permissible exposure limits (PELs) because respirators can provide you an additional level of comfort and protection.
- If you choose to voluntarily use a respirator (whether it is provided by you or your employer) be aware that **respirators can create hazards for you**, the user. You can avoid these hazards if you know how to use your respirator properly AND how to keep it clean. Take these steps:
  - Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer about use, maintenance (cleaning and care), and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.
  - Choose respirators that have been certified for use to protect against the substance of concern. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) certifies respirators. If a respirator is not certified by NIOSH, you have no guarantee that it meets minimum design and performance standards for workplace use.
    - A NIOSH approval label will appear on or in the respirator packaging. It will tell you what protection the respirator provides.
  - Keep track of your respirator so you do not mistakenly use someone else's.
  - **DO NOT** wear your respirator into:
    - Required use situations when you are only allowed voluntary use.
    - Atmospheres containing hazards that your respirator is not designed to protect against.  
For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against solvent vapor, smoke or oxygen deficiency.

### **Cleaning, Maintenance and Storage**

Cleaning, maintenance and proper storage are critical to reliable protection from your respirator. Inspection and maintenance shall be conducted in accordance with [WAC 296-842-17015](#). Respirators should be clean, pliable, and have no signs of damage or defect.

- Clean respirator components in accordance with manufacturer recommendations
- Clean shared respirators before using
- Clean respirators using methods which prevent damage to the respirator, and skin irritation to users
- Inspect respirators for damage, defects and cleanliness before using
  - Do not use a damaged, defective, or dirty respirator
  - Remove damaged or defective respirators from service and tag them to prevent inadvertent use before repair
- Repair or replace damaged or defective respirators
  - Use only manufacturer approved parts to repair respirators
  - Repairs shall be conducted in accordance with manufacturer instructions
- Ensure your respirator is assembled properly before use
- Do not modify your respirator in any way
- Store respirators so they are protected from
  - Damage or deformation
  - Sunlight
  - Dust, soil and foreign substances such as chemicals
  - Extreme temperatures

### **Work in Hazardous Atmospheres**

Employees must don respirators before entering a required use area and must leave the required use area before removing them.

You must leave the use area for any of these reasons

- To replace hoods, hoses, or filtering facepieces
- If you smell or taste (detect) vapor or gas
- If you detect a changes in breathing resistance
- To readjust the fit of your respirator
- To wash your face or respirator to prevent skin or eye irritation
- If you become ill
- If you experience sensations of dizziness, nausea, weakness, breathing difficulty, coughing, sneezing, vomiting, fever, or chills

### **Safe Breathing Air in Air-Line Respirators**

- Position compressors for air-line respirators so they provide safe breathing air when in use
  - Oxygen content between 19.5 and 23.5%
  - Do not place near industrial or vehicle exhaust, combustion device, fire, or embers
  - Ensure the compressor is outside any hazardous chemical or dusty atmosphere
  - Monitor for changes which may create unsafe breathing conditions at the compressor
- Compressors must be maintained and operated in accordance with manufacturer recommendations
- Compressor supplied air may not exceed a dew point of 10°F (or 5.56°C) below the use temperature at 1 atmospheric pressure

## Medical Evaluation

