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1789

RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE MASKS
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PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the safe and effective handling of respiratory protective masks by personnel of this department.

POLICY: It is the policy of the Albany Police Department to maintain a respiratory protection program in compliance with [OSHA standards 29 CFR 1910.134](#) (Respiratory Protection). Employees who are assigned, or wish to be assigned to positions wherein respiratory protective mask use is or may be required, shall be medically cleared, fit-tested, and trained in the use of the respiratory protective masks. Any employee who is required to wear a tight fitting respirator must not have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face, or that interferes with respirator valve function.

DEFINITIONS: **Air Purifying Respirator (APR)** – Air Purifying Respirator means a respirator with an air purifying filter, cartridge, or canister that removes specific air contaminants by passing ambient air through the air-purifying element.

Clearance – Clearance means the successful completion of medical assessment, occupational physical (if necessary), training, and fit testing with a respirator. All users must have clearance in order to be issued a respiratory protective mask.

Fit Test – Fit test means a detailed process to assure that the respirator is properly sealed to the face. A fit test is conducted as part of initial training, and annually thereafter. For an adequate fit test, an employee must not have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece, and the face, or that interfere with respirator valve function.

Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) – IDLH means an atmosphere that poses an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual’s ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere.

Millennium Protective Mask – Millennium protective mask means an air purifying respirator used to protect the face, eyes, and respiratory tract from chemical agents.

Occupational Physical – Occupational physical means a comprehensive physical examination of any employee who was not medically cleared by means of the medical assessment questionnaire.

Seal Check – Seal check means a test conducted by the employee wearing a protective mask to determine if the respirator is properly sealed to the face. It is repeated each time the respirator is donned or adjusted. For an adequate seal check, an employee must not have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face, or that interferes with respirator valve function.

Tight-Fitting Face Piece – Tight-fitting face piece means a respiratory inlet covering that forms a complete seal with the face.

Physician or other Licensed Health Care Professional (PLHCP) – PLHCP means an individual whose legally permitted scope of practice (license, registration, or certificate) allows him or her to independently provide, or be delegated the responsibility to provide, some or all of the health care services referred to above.

I. ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY

- A.** This policy will apply to all employees who work in settings in which the air lacks adequate oxygen, and is contaminated or may be contaminated with harmful levels of dust, fumes, mists, gases, fogs, sprays, fibers, or vapors.
- B.** The Commander of the Administrative Services Bureau shall be responsible for the overall implementation and maintenance of the department respiratory protection program, and ensuring that the following duties are performed by supervisors and employees:
 - 1. Tasks requiring respiratory protection are identified;
 - 2. Proper respiratory protection is selected for each specific application;
 - 3. Employee training and fit testing is conducted;
 - 4. Medical evaluations and occupational physical examinations, where necessary, for respirator users are conducted; and
 - 5. The respirator protection program is continually evaluated and is achieving its desired goal.
- C.** Supervisors shall be responsible for the following:
 - 1. Ensuring that the appropriate respirators are available for use;
 - 2. Ensuring that employees wear the required respirators;
 - 3. Ensuring that employees are adequately maintaining their respirators; and
 - 4. Ensuring that employees clean, maintain, and properly store respirators after use.
- D.** Employees shall be responsible for the following:
 - 1. Using the respirator in accordance with the training received;
 - 2. Inspecting, cleaning, sanitizing, and properly storing the respirator; and

3. Ensuring that their respiratory protective equipment is available for use, as appropriate.

II. MEDICAL EVALUATIONS

- A. Personnel required to wear a respirator must be medically evaluated to determine the employee's ability to use a respirator.
 1. The medical evaluation must be completed prior to fit testing;
 2. At minimum, the evaluation will include a review of the medical assessment questionnaire;
 3. The medical evaluation shall be conducted by a physician or other licensed health care provider;
 4. All medical documentation will be maintained by the Office of Professional Standards.

- B. The use of a respirator may place a physiological burden on an employee. This varies with each individual. Successful completion of the medical evaluation is required prior to training or fit testing. The questionnaire shall determine an employee's ability to wear respiratory protective equipment:
 1. The [Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire](#) is accessible via the Department Homepage and PowerDMS;
 2. Upon completion of the medical assessment questionnaire by the employee, the form shall be sent to the Office of Professional Standards;
 3. The medical assessment questionnaire shall be reviewed by a physician or other licensed health care professional for medical clearance;
 4. Employees who cannot be cleared for respirator use based upon the questionnaire alone will receive an appropriate physical medical examination for possible clearance;
 5. The department shall authorize these examinations at a specific physician's office and the exams shall be scheduled by the Office of Professional Standards;
 6. The medical assessment questionnaire shall be maintained by the Office of Professional Standards within the employee's medical file; and
 7. This evaluation shall be repeated per the reviewer's recommendations, and/or when:
 - a. The employee reports medical signs or symptoms related to the ability to wear the respirator;
 - b. Any Albany Police Department supervisor recommends that an employee needs to be reevaluated;
 - c. Observations are made during fit testing and program to indicate such; or
 - d. A maximum of five (5) years has passed since the last evaluation.

III. FIT TESTING

- A. It is well recognized that no one respirator will fit every individual. Therefore, employees using tight-fitting face piece respirators shall be fit-tested at initial training to ensure a proper fit.

- B.** Fit testing shall then also be performed on an annual basis, or if one of the following occurs:
 - 1. If the employee's physical condition changes affecting the respirator fit (e.g., facial scarring, dental changes, cosmetic surgery, obvious change in body weight); or
 - 2. The employee fails a seal check.
- C.** Fit testing shall only be performed by personnel who are certified to conduct fit tests.
- D.** For employee safety, the following shall be adhered to:
 - 1. An employee must not have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face, or that interferes with the respirator valve function; and
 - 2. If corrective eyeglasses are worn by employees, they shall be worn so as not to affect the fit of the face piece. When corrective lenses are necessary, prescription lenses and optical kits shall be provided by the department.
- E.** Fit testing of tight fitting respirators shall be performed per accepted Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) protocols (Ref. [29 CFR 1910.134, Appendix A](#)).

IV. RESPIRATOR USE

- A.** For employee safety, tight fitting respirators shall not be worn by employees who have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face, or that interferes with respirator valve function.
- B.** Employees wearing tight fitting respirators shall perform a seal check each time they put on a respirator. The seal check shall be performed per the manufacturer's instructions.
- C.** Continuing Respirator Effectiveness – Supervisors shall assure that employees leave the respirator use area for the following reasons:
 - 1. To wash their faces and respirators to prevent eye or skin irritation;
 - 2. If they detect vapor or gas breakthrough, changes in breathing resistance or leakage of the face piece; or
 - 3. To replace the respirator, filter, cartridge, or canister element.
 - a.** If the employee detects conditions described above, the supervisor shall not allow the employee back into the work area until the respirator is repaired or replaced.
- D.** Procedures for Immediately Dangerous to Life of Health (IDLH) Atmospheres:

- 1. Prior to entry into an IDLH atmosphere, the supervisor shall ensure at

least one employee remains outside the atmosphere.

2. Visual, voice, or signal line communications must be maintained between employees inside the IDLH atmosphere and outside (radios are acceptable).

E. Maintenance, Cleaning, Inspection, and Storage:

1. Respirators shall be cleaned and disinfected, as outlined in the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Respirators shall be cleaned when the following occurs:
 - a. Respirators issued for the exclusive use of one employee shall be cleaned and disinfected as often as necessary to be maintained in a sanitary condition; and
 - b. Respirators used in fit testing shall be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
3. Respirators shall be inspected to check function, tightness of connections, and the conditions of various parts including the face piece, head straps, valves, and cartridges or filters. Also elastomeric parts shall be checked for pliability and signs of deterioration.
 - a. Respirators shall be inspected before each use and during each cleaning.
4. Respirators found in disrepair shall be taken out of service and not returned unless repaired by a properly trained individual.
5. All respirators shall be stored to protect them from damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and damaging chemicals. They shall be stored to prevent deformation of the face piece and exhalation valve, and in such a manner as to have them readily accessible in the event that an immediate need arises.

V. TRAINING

- A. All employees who are required to use respiratory protection shall be instructed in why respirators are necessary and how improper fit, usage, or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator.
- B. Training shall be provided prior to any assignment requiring the use of such equipment, annually thereafter, and whenever one of the following occurs:
 1. Inadequacies in an employee's knowledge or use of a respirator indicate that the employee has not retained the required understanding or skill; or
 2. Any situation arises in which retraining appears necessary.
- C. Training shall be conducted by qualified personnel and shall include information on the following:
 1. The limitations and capabilities of respirators;
 2. Use of respirators effectively in emergency situations, including when a

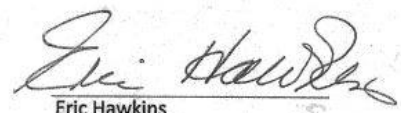
- respirator malfunctions;
- 3. How to inspect, put on, and remove the respirator;
- 4. How to use and check the seal of the respirator;
- 5. Maintenance and storage procedures;
- 6. How to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of the respirators; and
- 7. The general requirements of the respiratory protection standard.

VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION

- A. The Commander of the Administrative Services Bureau shall continually evaluate the respiratory protection program to ensure that it is being properly implemented and continues to be effective. Factors to be assessed include:
 - 1. Respirator fit;
 - 2. Respirator selection;
 - 3. Proper use under the workplace conditions that employees encounter; and
 - 4. Proper respirator maintenance.
- B. Problems identified through consultations with employees shall be corrected.

VII. RECORD KEEPING

- A. Office of Professional Standards:
 - 1. The Office of Professional Standards shall maintain the results of respirator clearance reports and the results of occupational physicals in the employee's medical files.
 - 2. All medical documentation concerning clearance for respirators must be kept confidential and maintained in a separate medical personnel file of each employee.
- B. Training:
 - 1. Employee's name, dates of training, and type of subsequent training shall be maintained by the Training Unit and recorded in the employee's training record.
- C. Fit Testing:
 - 1. A copy of the Fit Test report shall be maintained by the Training Unit.


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