

CCS Administrative Procedure

2.30.05 – K Respiratory Protection Program

Implementing Board Policy [2.30.05](#)

Contact: Environmental Health & Safety, (509) 533-8686

1.0 Purpose

Community Colleges of Spokane (CCS) is committed to the health and safety of its faculty and staff and in maintaining a safe and efficient workplace that complies with all local, state and federal safety and health regulations, programmatic standards, and with any special safety concerns identified at the unit level. Minimizing airborne contaminants where possible, and providing respiratory protective equipment where needed are important in helping to maintain a safe working environment for students, staff and visitors.

- 1.1 CCS has adopted [WAC 296-841](#) Respiratory Hazards and [WAC 296-842](#) Respirators to ensure that employees are protected from respiratory hazards.
- 1.2 CCS recognizes that the control of airborne contaminants by effective administrative or engineering control measures is preferable to providing employees with protective respiratory equipment.
- 1.3 Respiratory protective equipment, as outlined in this program, is required in those areas where administrative or engineering controls are either technically or economically unfeasible to maintain employee exposure to airborne contaminants at or below the established permissible exposure limits.

2.0 Terms and Definitions

- 2.1 Air-purifying Respirator: A respirator equipped with an air-purifying element such as a filter, cartridge, or canister, OR having a filtering facepiece.
- 2.2 Canister or Cartridge (Air Purifying): Part of an air purifying respirator that consists of a container holding materials such as fiber, treated charcoal or a combination of the two, that removes contaminants from the air passing through the cartridge or canister.
- 2.3 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 (N95 masks).
- 2.4 Half-Facepiece Respirator: A tight fitting respirator that only covers the wearer's nose and mouth.
- 2.5 Hazardous Material: Any solid, liquid or gas that may present some form of health or physical risk to personnel.
- 2.6 Licensed Health Care Professional (LHCP): An individual whose legally permitted scope of medical practice allows them to provide some or all the health care services required for respirator users' medical evaluations.
- 2.7 PEL – Permissible Exposure Limit: Employee exposures to toxic substances or harmful agents that must not be exceeded.

- 2.8 Qualitative Fit Test: A test that determines the adequacy of respirator fit for an individual. The test relies on the employee's ability to detect a test substance. Test results are either "pass" or "fail."
- 2.9 Quantitative Fit Test: A test that determines the adequacy of respirator fit for an individual. The test relies on specialized equipment that performs numeric measurements of leakage into the respiratory inlet covering. Test results are used to calculate a "fit factor."
- 2.10 Required Use: Respirator use that is mandated by employers or necessary to protect employees from respiratory hazards encountered on the job.
- 2.11 Seal Check: Actions conducted by the respirator user each time the respirator is put on to determine if the respirator is properly positioned on the face.
- 2.12 Voluntary Use: Respirator use that is requested by the employee and permitted by the employer when no respiratory hazards exist.

3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Office will:
 - 3.1.1 Monitor this program and conduct periodic audits to ensure that the basic elements are functioning according to this written plan.
 - 3.1.2 Conduct occupational exposure monitoring when indicated to ensure that the appropriate level of respiratory protection has been identified.
 - 3.1.3 Assist in arranging medical evaluations.
 - 3.1.4 Conduct respirator fit tests for CCS employees who are required to wear respirators.
 - 3.1.5 Establish initial training and annual refresher training for employees.
 - 3.1.6 Maintain records relating to respirator medical evaluation and fit tests as required in [WAC 296-842](#) Respirators.
- 3.2 Departments will:
 - 3.2.1 Purchase respirators, replacement parts, etc. as needed for the employees within the department.
 - 3.2.2 Monitor and enforce respirator use within the department.
 - 3.2.3 Periodically evaluate the need for and use of respirators within the department.
 - 3.2.4 Coordinate respirator fit tests and training for employees in the department with the EH&S Office.
 - 3.2.5 Cover the cost of medical evaluations for the employees in the department by a qualified physician when the employees are required to wear a respirator as part of their job.
- 3.3 Supervisors will:
 - 3.3.1 Ensure that all personnel under their authority are knowledgeable of the respiratory hazards for the areas in which they work.

- 3.3.2 Ensure all personnel under their authority receive the appropriate level of respirator training and that they comply with this respiratory protection program.
- 3.3.3 Alert the EH&S Office whenever a change in the work environment may affect the respiratory protection program.
- 3.4 Employees using respirators will:
 - 3.4.1 Be familiar with the respiratory hazards and protection requirements of their work area and follow the applicable procedures defined in the respirator protection program and during training.
 - 3.4.2 Maintain their equipment in a clean and operable condition, including proper storage to protect it against dust, sunlight, heat, extreme cold, excessive moisture or damaging chemicals.
 - 3.4.3 Inspect their respirator before each use to ensure it is functional and free of damage.
 - 3.4.4 Seal check their respirator before each use to ensure it is properly positioned on their face.
 - 3.4.5 Notify their supervisor of any changes in their physical condition that might affect their use of a respirator.
 - 3.4.6 Leave the hazardous area for any respirator-related malfunction, such as, but not limited to, the following:
 - 3.4.6.1 Failure of the respirator to provide adequate protection;
 - 3.4.6.2 Detection of leakage of air contaminant into the respirator;
 - 3.4.6.3 Increase in breathing resistance while wearing the respirator;
 - 3.4.6.4 Severe discomfort while wearing the respirator.
 - 3.4.7 Remain alert to changing work conditions in regard to respiratory hazards and degree of exposure or stress and respond to any changes in an appropriate, safety-focused manner.

4.0 Voluntary Use of Respirators

- 4.1 Employees who are not exposed to respiratory hazards may choose to use a half-facepiece respirator or filtering-facepiece respirator at their discretion. For more information on equipment provision responsibility, please refer to [CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.05 - W Personal Protective Equipment Provision, Use and Care](#).
- 4.2 Voluntary use of half-facepiece respirator requires medical evaluation/clearance prior to first use and at a determined interval thereafter, if needed, to ensure the use of such a respirator will not cause adverse health consequences for the employee. Medical evaluation costs for voluntary use of a respirator are at the employee's own expense.
- 4.3 Voluntary use of half-facepiece respirators and filtering-facepiece respirators such as N95 masks do not require fit testing.
- 4.4 Employees who use a respirator voluntarily will follow these guidelines:

- 4.4.1 Employees will be familiar with the design, operation, appropriate use conditions and limitations of the specific respirator they are choosing to use.
- 4.4.2 Employees will follow all maintenance guidelines outlined in section 8.0 of this procedure.
- 4.4.3 In situations where a respirator is required to be worn, employees will follow the guidelines for required use under this procedure and will not use their chosen respirator for voluntary use.

5.0 Respirator Selection for Required Use

- 5.1 Where practical, exposure to contamination will be reduced or eliminated by engineering controls. Examples include: general and local ventilation and exhaust; enclose and isolate equipment and processes; and/or substitution of less hazardous processes or materials.
- 5.2 The departments should work with the EH&S Office to conduct hazard assessments and evaluate whether respiratory protection is necessary for the employees. This assessment will identify areas and tasks where respiratory protection may be required and determine the appropriate types of respirators needed. Please contact the EH&S Office for assistance with a hazard assessment at (509) 533-8686.
- 5.3 Respirators will be selected based on the hazards identified during the hazard assessment. The selection process will consider the specific respirator models, sizes, and cartridge/filter combinations required for each hazardous task. The EH&S Office must review each respirator selection .
- 5.4 Respirators must be approved and certified by appropriate agencies as determined by the EH&S Office.
- 5.5 Respirators will be furnished at no cost to the employee.
- 5.6 Air purifying filter/cartridge respirators will be assigned to individuals and no employee will be required to loan or share their respirator with any other employee.

6.0 Medical Evaluation

- 6.1 Employees who are required to wear a respirator as part of their job must complete a medical evaluation before being permitted to wear a respirator for the first time.
 - 6.1.1 Before conducting a fit test and using the respirator for the first time, the employee must receive medical clearance from a Licensed Health Care Professional (LHCP). MultiCare Occupational Medicine provides CCS's respiratory protection program medical evaluation services.
 - 6.1.1.1 Medical evaluation requires the employee to complete a questionnaire via a secure web portal at <https://app.vestmed.com/login/multicare/>.
 - 6.1.1.2 Please contact the EH&S Office at (509) 533-8686 for the Username and Password and the steps for the medical evaluation.
- 6.2 The results of the medical evaluation will be kept in the employee's personnel file with the Human Resources Office (HRO) and a copy will be sent to the EH&S Office to review for any limitations for respirator usage and to authorize the employee for fit testing.

- 6.3 After the initial medical evaluation, subsequent medical evaluations are to be performed if any of the following occur:
 - 6.3.1 The LHCP recommends them.
 - 6.3.2 The EH&S Office informs the employee they need another medical evaluation.
 - 6.3.3 Negative medical signs or symptoms are observed during use.
 - 6.3.4 Changes in the workplace conditions such as physical work effort, personal protective clothing, or temperature that could substantially increase the employee's physiological stress.

7.0 Respirator Fit Test

- 7.1 A qualitative or quantitative respirator fit test will be used to determine the ability of the employee to obtain a satisfactory fit with a negative-pressure respirator.
- 7.2 The results of the fit test(s) will be used to select and assign specific types, makes, models, or sizes of negative-air respirators for use by the employee.
- 7.3 Fit tests will be required:
 - 7.3.1 Before employees are assigned duties that may require the use of respirators;
 - 7.3.2 Whenever a different respirator, such as model, type, style or size is assigned;
 - 7.3.3 The employee becomes aware of any physical change(s) that could affect respirator fit; or
 - 7.3.4 The employee notifies their supervisor that the respirator fit is unacceptable.
- 7.4 Each employee who is required to wear a respirator must be fit-tested annually.
- 7.5 All fit tests will be documented and kept in the employee's personnel file in HRO.
- 7.6 The EH&S Office provides qualitative fit testing. Please contact the EH&S Office to coordinate the fit testing for your respirator.

8.0 Cleaning, Maintenance, Inspection and Storage of Respirators

- 8.1 Each employee is responsible for the cleaning and maintenance of their personal respirator.
 - 8.1.1 Respirators are to be cleaned or disinfected as needed to keep them functional and to prevent harm to the employee.
 - 8.1.2 Cartridges on air purifying respirators must be monitored closely. If the cartridges are damaged, dirty, or expired, they must be replaced. If the employee feels as though they cannot perform their tasks without experiencing shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, they may replace the cartridges before the next use.
- 8.2 Employees will inspect their respirators before each use and replace the damaged ones.
- 8.3 Employees will properly store their respirators. Proper storage includes protection from damage, extreme temperatures, sunlight, excessive moisture, dust, contamination and damaging chemicals.

- 8.4 Respirators are to be stored in a way so as to not cause damage to the rubber seal, cartridges and inhalation/exhalation apparatuses.

9.0 Employee Training

- 9.1 Prior to being assigned to wear a respirator, each employee must receive training in respirator use as required by [WAC 296-842-16005](#).
- 9.2 Contact the EH&S Office at (509) 533-8686 to request training.

10.0 Record Keeping

- 10.1 The following records will be maintained by both the EH&S Office and HRO for each employee using a respirator:
- 10.1.1 The Completed Medical Respirator Clearance form provided by the Licensed Health Care Professional that performs the medical evaluation.
 - 10.1.2 The Completed Fit Test records.
- 10.2 Respirator Training Record
- 10.2.1 Departments will maintain a training record for their employees and forward a copy of the training record to HRO.

11.0 Program Evaluation

- 11.1 This procedure will be reviewed and revised as needed on an annual basis to ensure all contents of this program are up to date and all pertinent information is provided to CCS employees regarding respiratory hazards and respirator use.

12.0 Additional Resources

- 12.1 [WA State Department of Labor and Industries \(L&I\) Respirators Training and Resources](#)
- 12.2 [OSHA Respiratory Protection Training Videos](#)
- 12.3 [3M Respirator Selection Guide](#)
- 12.4 [North Cartridge & Filter Reference Chart](#)
- 12.5 [CCS Administrative Procedure 2.30.05 - W Personal Protective Equipment Provision, Use and Care](#)