NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

FACT SHEET #4
March 2004
REVISION: Second

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES FOR RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

General:
Respiratory protection devices are used to protect the wearer from the inhalation of harmful atmospheres. It is important to realize that respirators are "last resort" controls, to be used only when engineering controls and work practices are neither feasible nor adequate, or while these controls are being evaluated. Respirators must be selected and fitted properly in order to provide proper protection, therefore, the device must be selected only after careful assessment of the hazard. OEHS requires that anyone wearing respiratory protection be properly trained.

Definitions:
Respiratory Protection Device:
A respirator is a device designed to protect the respiratory system from harmful airborne contaminants. It may provide protection by removing contaminants from the air prior to inhalation or alternatively by supplying an independent fresh air supply for breathing.

Air Supplied Respirators:
Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
Hose Mask
Air-Line Respirator
Supplied-Air Suit

Air Purifying Respirators: (Gas and Vapor Removing / Particulate Removing)
Full Facepiece
Half-Mask
Mouthpiece
Self Rescue

Responsibilities:

Environmental Health and Safety
Provide information on selection of respirator.
Conduct Training Program.
Establish and administer medical surveillance program.
Loan of respirator(s) for short term use.
Record keeping.

Supervisor / Principal Investigator / Laboratory Director
Purchase respirator.
Purchase replacement parts, cartridges, filters.
Ensure that all users are properly trained.

Individual Employee / Student
Obtain proper training prior to use.
Inspection and maintenance of respiratory protection devices.
Cleaning and disinfection.
Fitting.
Storage.
Use when necessary

Requirements:

1. Only individuals with medical approval can wear respiratory protective devices.
2. The proper respirator (and air purifying element) must be chosen for the hazard.
3. A respirator must be inspected for defects and/or leaks after each use or daily.
4. If defects are found they should be corrected by replacement of defective parts by new parts. Otherwise the respirator should be discarded.
5. A respirator must be washed and disinfected after each day's use.
6. Air purifying filters and cartridges have a limited service life and should be changed when they are no longer effective. The useful life of a dust filter has been reached when it becomes difficult to inhale due to plugging by retained particles. A gas and vapor cartridge is no longer useful after the wearer can sense odor or irritation.
7. When a respirator is not in use, it should be placed in a plastic film bag, then placed in a carton and stored in a clean, dry, cool place specifically designated for respirator storage.

References:

2. Environmental Health and Safety Information Fact Sheet "Respirator Maintenance (Air Purifying Respirator)".

*For further information please contact Environmental Health and Safety at x2769*