**RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM**

**VOLUNTARY USE OF RESPIRATORS**

**\**

**General Industry Standard 29 CFR 1910.134**

**Prepared for:**

**(INSERT YOUR agency HERE)**

Reviewed by (print name): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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# PURPOSE

The **INSERT AGENCY’S NAME** has a voluntary use policy with respect to respiratory protection. This means there are no known job tasks where Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) are exceeded. However, if an employee chooses to wear a respirator, the **INSERT AGENCY’S NAME** will provide the employee with a respirator for their comfort in accordance with this policy. The following procedures must be followed if you choose to wear a respirator.

OSHA 1910.134(c)(2) states that the employer may provide respirators at the request of employees or permit employees to use their own respirators if the employer determines that the respirator use will not in itself create a hazard. The employer shall:

* Provide the respirator users with the information contained in Appendix D of 1910.134 (“Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard”) (see Attachment B).
* Exception: Employers are not required to include in a written respiratory protection program those employees whose only use of respirators involves the voluntary use of filtering face pieces (dust masks)(OSHA1910.134(c)(2)(ii).

# RESPIRATORS

A respirator is a device that protects you from inhaling dangerous substances, such as chemicals and hazardous materials or infectious agents. Selecting the right respirator requires an assessment of all the workplace operations, processes or environments that may create a respiratory hazard.

* **Particulate Respirators** only protect against particles (e.g., dust). They do not protect against chemicals, gases, or vapors, and are intended only for low hazard levels. The “N-95” filtering facepiece2 respirator or “dust mask” is one type of particulate respirator. Particulate respirators filter out dusts, fumes, and mists, are usually disposable dust masks or respirators with disposable filters, and must be replaced when they become discolored, damaged, or clogged.

# POTENTIAL HAZARDS

Masks and respirators reduce exposure to the hazard, but if the exposure is such that it is greater than the filter is designed to handle, the filter may not be effective in providing the required protection. If you think that your job responsibilities may expose you to substances at concentrations above OSHA’s PELs please contact your Supervisor, who will make arrangements to have your workspace evaluated and tested.

# MEDICAL EVALUATION

Not required under this voluntary use policy.

# SUMMARY

If you voluntarily choose to wear a dust mask:

If you wish to voluntarily wear a half-face tight-fitting respirator (for comfort use only) you must:

* Read Appendix A on this program, sign the bottom, and return the signed acknowledgement to the supervisor.
* After you have been approved for respirator use, **INSERT AGENCY’S NAME** will provide you with a respirator, and instructions on how to clean, store, and maintain your respirator.
* **INSERT AGENCY’S NAME** can also arrange to have you fit-tested if you would like to ensure that your respirator is properly fitted.

# APPENDIX A: SIGN-OFF VOLUNTARY USE OF RESPIRATOR

**To: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**From: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Re: Voluntary Use of Filtering Face Piece Respirators**

The department has made N95 and other filtering face piece respirators available. Use of respirators is voluntary and is not required under OSHA standards. NJPEOSH requires the following information be provided to employees considering the voluntary use of a respirator:

* Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer on the use, maintenance, cleaning, and limitations of the respirator
* Use only NIOSH-certified filtering face piece respirators for the contaminant of concern.
* Do not wear the respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, N95 respirators are designed for dust and non-oily mists and will not protect the wearer from smoke, gases, or oxygen-deficient atmospheres.
* Keep track of your respirator. Do not share respirators.

In addition:

* Respirators should be disposed of frequently. The frequency will depend on use.
* Respirators can place a physical demand on the wearer. If you have any concerns, talk to your physician.
* Talking and other head movements, facial hair, and other personal protective equipment can limit the effectiveness of the respirator.

Appendix D is provided on the reverse side of this page. Please read and acknowledge by signing below. If you have further questions, please speak to **ADD PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**.

**Appendix D to Sec. 1910.134 (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard**   
  
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 follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.   
  
2. Choose respirators certified to protect against the contaminant of concern. 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.

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| **Employee Name** | **Signature** | **Date** |
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