Voluntary Respiratory Protection Program

This Program applies filtering facepiece masks worn by one or more of the following checked groups of employees:

☑ Maintenance personnel
☑ Grounds personnel

☑ This program applies to all Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE) employees on a voluntary basis. Currently, no airborne contaminant levels are known to exceed Permissible Exposure Levels (PELs).

This Program does not apply to wearing of any respirator with a rubber facepiece and cartridges or any atmosphere-supplying respirators.

DEFINITIONS

Respirator: A device to protect the wearer from inhalation of harmful contaminants.

Mask: A filtering facepiece in the air purifying respirator (APR) category. A disposable device, usually made of layers of fabric or paper used to protect the wearer from inhalation of nuisance contaminants and odors, or harmful contaminants at low airborne concentrations.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Risk Manager is to give every consideration to the use of effective engineering and/or administrative controls to reduce the need for respiratory protection.

Filtering facepiece masks may be worn:

☑ As voluntarily determined by the employee;
☑ Where emergency protection against occasional and/or relatively brief exposure is desired;

SELECTION OF RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

- Voluntary use of respirators is restricted to simple particulate filtering dust masks including N, R, and P varieties with 95%-100% effectiveness in blocking particulate aerosols.
- More advanced types of respirators such as half-face cartridge types and air supplied systems require medical evaluations and clearance, training, and fit testing, as well as procedures for selection and maintenance of equipment, which are determined by the employer and are not included in the voluntary use program.

All respiratory protective equipment has use limitations. The type of personal protective equipment selected, including respirators, is dependent upon the type of work being performed, the airborne hazard, and available oxygen.

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Improper selection or using inadequate equipment can lead to serious injury or illness, and under certain conditions could be fatal.

This VCOE allows employees to use the following respirators voluntarily:

☑️ Only respirators that can be used in the VCOE are those approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

**RESPIRATOR USE LIMITS**

Air purifying respirators (APRs) have limitations and are not approved for use:

1. When the contaminant has poor warning properties and is not easily recognized by taste, smell or irritation at or below its permissible exposure limit, such as Carbon Monoxide.
2. In oxygen-deficient atmospheres (atmospheres containing less than 19.5% oxygen), or oxygen enriched atmospheres. APRs do not supply oxygen, or filter out high levels of oxygen or other gases.
3. When the contaminant concentration exceeds the NIOSH maximum designated use concentration for the respirator.
4. In atmospheres that could become immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH): where a short exposure could cause death, injury, illness, or delayed reaction.

**ADDITIONAL CAUTION WARNINGS**

1. Failure to properly use and maintain this product could result in injury or death
2. All approved respirators shall be selected, fitted, used, and maintained in accordance with OSHA, and other applicable regulations.
3. Employees must never substitute, modify, add, or omit parts.
4. Employees are encouraged to refer to the user’s instructions and or maintenance manuals for information on use and maintenance of respirators.

**LEAKAGE**

A poor face seal may be caused by weight gain/loss changing the physical features of the wearer's face.

Leakage can also be caused by a growth of beard or other facial hair, or wearing any item that interferes with the facepiece seal.

**TRAINING**

Respirator Training is not required for voluntary users of a particulate mask, however, it is recommended to ensure the user understands the procedures for donning and wearing a mask. Also, the employee must be given the Appendix D information sheet per Cal/OSHA regulations.
FIT TESTING

No fit testing is required for the voluntary use of a particulate mask.

MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE

Medical approval is not required from an approved medical source before a particulate mask can be worn for voluntary use.

MAINTENANCE AND STORAGE

Disposable masks, if not thrown away at the end of the day, must be stored to protect it against dust and damaging chemicals, and so that the inside will not be contaminated. Place disposable masks in a sealable plastic bag when not in use. Each disposable mask should be discarded after eight (8) hours of cumulative use.

RECORDKEEPING

Records are to be maintained for all employees who voluntarily choose to wear a particulate mask.

- An Appendix D Acknowledgement must be signed by the employee when choosing to voluntarily wear a respirator

PROGRAM EVALUATION

This program is to be evaluated annually to assess effectiveness. Corrective actions will be taken to rectify any deficiencies in the program.