Risk Management and Safety (RMS)
Respiratory Protection Program
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A. **SCOPE AND APPLICATION**

The Respiratory Protection Program is established in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.134 “Respiratory Protection” and describes the program elements necessary to protect employees and student workers from the harmful affects of airborne dusts, fogs, fumes, mists, gases, smokes, sprays, or vapors (airborne contaminants) at all University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) properties.

B. **COMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM**

All affected employees shall follow this procedure when respirator use is required.

C. **DEFINITIONS**

(1) **Affected Employee** – Employees and student workers who may have contact with airborne contaminates generated during UNLV operations which require the use of a respirator.

(2) **Employee Exposure** – Exposure to a concentration of an airborne contaminant that would occur if the employee were not using respiratory protection.

(3) **End-of-service-life indicator (ESLI)** – A system that warns the respirator user of the approach of the end of adequate respiratory protection, for example, that the sorbent is approaching saturation or is no longer effective.

(4) **Fit Test** – The use of a protocol to qualitatively or quantitatively evaluate the fit of a respirator on an individual.

(5) **Immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH)** – 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.

(6) **Oxygen Deficient Atmosphere** – An atmosphere with oxygen content below 19.5% by volume.

(7) **User Seal Check** – An action conducted by the respirator user to determine if the respirator is properly seated on the face.

### D. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(1) **Risk Management and Safety (RMS)**

a. Develop and maintain the Respiratory Protection Program.

b. Assist departments evaluate their work spaces for respiratory contaminants.

c. Evaluate engineering and administrative controls instituted by departments.

d. Make “Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire” available.

e. Offer training and fit testing for affected employees.

(2) **Department Managers and Supervisors**

a. Coordinate with RMS to determine if respiratory hazards are present and the type of respiratory protection that may be required.

b. Determine if engineering and administrative controls are feasible for work spaces generating airborne contaminants.

c. Implement the Respiratory Protection Program.

d. Provide appropriate respirators, filters, and parts at no cost to affected employees. The selection of respirators shall be based upon a workplace assessment.

e. Allocate time for cleaning, disinfecting, repairing, and maintaining respirators, when necessary.

f. For gases and vapors, departments shall follow filter manufacturer’s change out schedule before working in areas requiring respirator
use. Links to manufacturer’s websites can be found on the RMS website.

g. Allow employees time during normal working hours to complete medical questionnaires, training, and fit testing requirements.

h. Provide adequate respirator storage.

i. Inspect respirators designated for emergency use monthly for proper operation.

(3) Off-Campus Heath Care Provider

a. Evaluate “Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaires.”

b. Provide respirator use clearance letters to RMS and individuals evaluated.

c. Refer individuals requiring follow-up examinations to appropriate physicians or licensed health care professionals.

d. Maintain medical files for all individuals evaluated for respirator use.

(4) Respirator User

a. Accomplish the following initial and annual requirements:

i. Prepare “Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire”

ii. Obtain a medical clearance

iii. Attend the training course.

iv. Contact RMS to schedule a respirator fit test.

v. Complete a fit test for each respirator type they will use.

b. Inspect respirators for proper function before use and during cleaning to identify defective parts for replacement. Turn in an unusable respirator to their supervisor for replacement.

c. Perform user seal checks each time they put on a respirator.

d. Repair or replace respirators when: detecting vapor or gas break through or experiencing a change in breathing resistance/leakage, before re-entering areas requiring their use.
e. Clean and disinfect respirators using OSHA or manufacturer recommended procedures as often as needed and then place respirators in the proper storage location.

E. **MEDICAL EVALUATIONS**

   (1) The following steps will be completed by those who use respirators:

   a. Complete the “Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire” and deliver to the off-campus health care provider.

   b. Obtain a medical clearance (with limitations shown) from the health care provider.

   c. Receive a referral to an off-campus provider for medical tests, consultations, or diagnostic procedures, if necessary.

F. **FIT TEST PROCEDURES**

   (1) During the fit test appointment:

   a) Provide a test respirator of the same type and size that the individual will use on the job.

   b) Cover the proper placement and tightening of respirator straps.

   c) Instruct how to properly conduct positive and negative pressure user checks and observe users while they complete these checks.

   (2) Once the individual has performed user seal checks and obtained a good seal, the individual will complete a quantitative fit test. If the equipment to provide a quantitative fit test is not available, a qualitative fit test will be given.

   (3) Upon successful completion of the fit test, the individual will sign their fit test report and receive a “Respirator Identification” card.

G. **TRAINING**

   (1) Training will be provided to affected employees annually and more frequently when necessary.
(2) Respirator training, fit testing, and medical evaluations will be provided at no cost to affected employees and may be discontinued when affected employees are no longer required to wear respirators.

I. IDLH ATMOSPHERES

(1) Before entering potential IDLH locations, contact RMS for instructions prior to entry.

J. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(1) The UNLV RMS website contains regularly updated information to include the following:
   a) OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire
   b) User Seal Check Procedure
   c) Respiratory Cleaning and Storage Procedure
   d) Respirator Inspection Procedure
   e) Information for Employees Using Respirators When not Required Under Standard
   f) OSHA Bulletin: General Respiratory Protection Guidance for Employers and Workers

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