



## SAFETY PROGRAM

# **VOLUNTARY RESPIRATORY PROTECTION WRITTEN PROGRAM**

May 23, 2023

**ST CLOUD TECHNICAL AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
VOLUNTARY RESPIRATOR USE**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this respirator program is to establish standard operating procedures to ensure the protection of all employees from respiratory hazards through proper selection and use of respirators. This program applies to all employees who volunteer to wear respirators during normal operations, non-routine tasks, or emergency operations such as a spill of a hazardous substance. If the use of respiratory protection in a specific case will not jeopardize the health or safety of the employee(s), St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) will provide respirators for voluntary use.

**SCOPE AND APPLICATION**

Any employee who voluntarily wears a respirator when a respirator is not required (i.e., in certain maintenance and welding operations) is subject to the medical evaluation, cleaning, maintenance and storage elements of this program and must be provided with certain information specified in this program.

Employees participating in the respiratory protection program do so at no cost to them. The expense associated with training, medical evaluations and respiratory protection equipment will be borne by St. Cloud Technical & Community College.

<b>Voluntary Respirator Use at St. Cloud Technical &amp; Community College</b>	
<b>Respirator</b>	<b>Department/Process</b>
Filtering face piece (dust mask)	Voluntary use for Facilities Maintenance workers
Half- face piece APR or PAPR with p100 filter	Voluntary use for Welding Program Instructors during certain welding operations
N-95 face mask	Voluntary use for the Covid Team during certain Covid-related health assessments for students and employees.

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

***Director of Safety & Security Duties***

SCTCC has designated the Director of Safety & Security to oversee the respiratory protection program. Duties of the Director of Safety & Security include:

- Identifying work areas, processes or tasks that require workers to wear respirators, and evaluating hazards.
- Selection of respiratory protection options.

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- Monitoring respirator use to ensure that respirators are used in accordance with their certifications.
- Arranging for and/or conducting training.
- Ensuring proper storage and maintenance of respiratory protection equipment.
- Conducting or arranging for fit testing.
- Administering the medical surveillance program.
- Maintaining records required by the program.
- Evaluating the program.
- Updating written program as needed.

### ***Supervisors' Duties***

Supervisors are responsible for identifying if employees are voluntarily using respirators in their particular areas. In addition to being knowledgeable about the voluntary program requirements for their own protection, supervisors must also ensure that the program is understood and followed by the employees under their charge. Duties of the supervisor include:

- Ensuring that employees under their supervision (including new hires) have received appropriate training, fit testing, and medical evaluation.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate respirators and accessories.
- Being aware of tasks where employees are voluntarily using respirators.
- Enforcing the proper use of respiratory protection when necessary.
- Ensuring that respirators are properly cleaned, maintained, and stored according to the respiratory protection plan.
- Ensuring that respirators fit well and do not cause discomfort.
- Continually monitoring work areas and operations to identify respiratory hazards
- Coordinating with the Director of Safety & Security on how to address respiratory hazards or other concerns regarding the program

### ***Employees' Duties***

Each employee has the responsibility to wear his or her respirator when and where required and in the manner in which they were trained. Employees must also:

- Care for and maintain their respirators as instructed and store them in a clean sanitary location.

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- Inform their supervisor if the respirator no longer fits well, and request a new one that fits properly.
- Inform their supervisor or the Director of Safety & Security of any respiratory hazards that they feel may not be adequately addressed in the workplace and of any other concerns that they have regarding the program.

### **VOLUNTARY RESPIRATOR USE**

SCTCC will provide (or allow employee-owned) respirators at no charge to employees for voluntary usage for the following work processes:

- Maintenance employees may volunteer to wear filtering face pieces when vacuuming.
- Welding instructors and lab personnel may volunteer to wear Miller half-face piece APRs with some welding operations that generate nuisance dust.

The Director of Safety & Security will provide all employees who voluntarily choose to wear either of the above respirators with a copy of Appendix D of the standard. (Appendix D details the requirements for voluntary use of respirators by employees.) Employees choosing to wear a half face piece air purifying respirators (APR) must comply with the procedures for medical evaluation, respirator use, and cleaning, maintenance and storage.

The Director of Safety & Security shall authorize voluntary use of respiratory protective equipment as requested by all other workers on a case-by-case basis, depending on specific workplace conditions and the results of the medical evaluations.

### **RESPIRATOR FILTER AND CANISTER REPLACEMENT/CHANGE SCHEDULE**

An important part of the Respiratory Protection Program includes identifying the useful life of canisters and filters used on air purifying respirators. Each filter and canister shall be equipped with an end-of-service-life indicator (ESLI) certified by NIOSH for the contaminant; or

If there is no ESLI appropriate for conditions a change schedule for canisters and cartridges that is based on objective information or data that will ensure that canisters and cartridges are changed before the end of their service life.

***Cartridges/Filters shall be changed*** based on the most limiting factor below:

- Prior to expiration date
- Manufacturer's recommendations for use and environment
- After each use
- When requested by employee

- When restriction to air flow has occurred as evidenced by increased effort by user to breathe normally

## **MEDICAL EVALUATION**

Employees who choose to wear an APR respirator must be medically evaluated before being permitted to wear a respirator on the job. Employees are not permitted to wear respirators until a physician has determined that they are medically able to do so. Any employee refusing the medical evaluation will not be allowed to work in an area requiring respirator use.

Medical evaluation procedures are as follows:

- The medical evaluation will be conducted using medical questionnaire provided in Appendix C of 29 CFR 1910.134 Respiratory Protection Standard. The Director of Safety & Security will provide a copy of this questionnaire to all employees requiring medical evaluation.
- To the extent feasible, SCTCC will assist employees who are unable to read the questionnaire. When this is not possible the employee will be sent directly to the health care professional for assistance and medical evaluation.
- All affected employees will be given a copy of the medical questionnaire to fill out. These employees will be required to bring the medical questionnaire to their medical evaluation. Employees will be permitted to fill out the questionnaire on company time.
- Follow up medical exams will be provided to employees as required by the OSHA standard, and/or as deemed necessary by the health care professional.
- All employees will be allowed the opportunity to speak with the health care professional about their medical evaluation if they so request.
- The Director of Safety & Security will provide the health care professional with a copy of this program and a copy of OSHA's respiratory protection standard. For each employee requiring evaluation, the health care professional will be provided with information regarding the employee's work area or job title, proposed respirator type and weight, length of time required to wear the respirator, expected physical work load (light, moderate, or heavy), potential temperature and humidity extremes, and any additional protective clothing required.
- After an employee has received clearance to wear a respirator, additional medical evaluations will be provided under any of the following circumstances:
  - The employee reports signs and/or symptoms related to their ability to use a respirator, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pains, or wheezing;
  - The health care professional or supervisor informs the Director of Safety & Security that the employees needs to be reevaluated;

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- Information from this program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need for reevaluation; and
- A change occurs in workplace conditions that may result in an increased physiological burden on the employee.

**NOTE:** All examinations and questionnaires are to remain confidential between the employee and the physician.

### **FIT TESTING PROCEDURES**

The Director of Safety & Security will ensure that fit-test will be administered using an OSHA-accepted qualitative fit test (QLFT) or quantitative fit test (QNFT) protocol. The OSHA-accepted QLFT and QNFT protocols are contained in Appendix A of the Respiratory Standard (1910.134).

SCTCC requires employees to be fit tested at the following times and with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator that they will be using:

- Before volunteering to wear any respirator with a tight-fitting face piece and at least annually thereafter;
- Whenever a different respirator face piece (size, style, model, or make) is used;
- Whenever visual observations of changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respirator fit. Such conditions include, but are not limited to, facial scarring, dental changes, cosmetic surgery, or an obvious change in body weight; and
- Upon employee notification that the fit of the respirator is unacceptable.

SCTCC has established a record of the fit tests administered to employees including:

- The name or identification of the employee tested;
- Type of fit test performed;
- Specific make, model, style, and size of respirator tested;
- Date of test; and
- The pass/fail results

## **USE OF RESPIRATORS**

### ***General Use Procedures***

Employees that volunteer to use respirators will use their respirators under conditions specified by this program, and in accordance with the training they receive on the use of each particular model. In addition, the respirator shall not be used in a manner for which it is not certified by NIOSH or its manufacturer.

All employees shall conduct user seal checks each time that they wear their respirator. Employees shall use either the positive or negative pressure check (depending on which test works best for them) specified in Appendix B-1 of the Respiratory Protection Standard.

All employees shall be permitted to leave the work area to maintain their respirator for the following reasons: to clean their respirator if the respirator is impeding their ability to work, change filters or cartridges, replace parts, or to inspect respirator if it stops functioning as intended. Employees should notify their supervisor before leaving the area.

Employees are not permitted to wear tight fitting respirators if they have any condition, such as facial hair, facial scars, or missing dentures that prevents them from achieving a good seal. Employees are not permitted to wear headphones, jewelry, or other articles that may interfere with the face piece to face seal.

## **CLEANING, MAINTENANCE, CHANGE SCHEDULES AND STORAGE**

### ***Cleaning***

Respirators are to be regularly cleaned and disinfected as often as necessary.

The following procedure is to be used when cleaning and disinfecting respirators:

- Disassemble respirator, removing any filters, canisters, or cartridges.
- Wash the face piece and associated parts in a mild detergent with warm water. Do not use organic solvents.
- Rinse completely in clean warm water.
- Wipe the respirator with disinfectant wipes (70% Isopropyl Alcohol) to kill germs.
- Air dry in a clean area.
- Reassemble the respirator and replace any defective parts.

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- Place in a clean, dry plastic bag or other airtight container.

Note: The Director of Safety & Security will ensure an adequate supply of appropriate cleaning and disinfecting material at the cleaning station. If supplies are low, employees should contact their supervisor, who will inform the Director of Safety & Security.

### ***Maintenance***

Respirators are to be properly maintained at all times in order to ensure that they function properly and adequately protect the employee. Maintenance involves a thorough visual inspection for cleanliness and defects. Worn or deteriorated parts will be replaced prior to use. No components will be replaced or repairs made beyond those recommended by the manufacturer. Repairs to regulators or alarms of atmosphere-supplying respirators will be conducted by the manufacturer.

The following checklist will be used when inspecting respirators:

- Face Piece:
  - Cracks, tears, or holes
  - Facemask distortion
  - Cracked or loose lenses/face shield
- Head Straps:
  - Breaks or tears
  - Broken buckles
- Valves:
  - Residue or dirt
  - Cracks or tears in valve material
- Filters/Cartridges:
  - Approval designation
  - Gaskets
  - Cracks or dents in housing
  - Proper cartridge for hazard

Employees are permitted to leave their work area to perform limited maintenance on their respirator in a designated area that is free of respiratory hazards. Situations when this is permitted include to wash their face and respirator face piece to prevent any eye or skin irritation, to replace the filter, cartridge or canister, and if they detect vapor or gas breakthrough or leakage in the face piece or if they detect any other damage to the respirator or its components.



### ***Change Schedules***

Employees wearing APRs or PAPRs with P100 filters for protection against particulates shall change the cartridges on their respirators when they first begin to experience difficulty breathing (i.e., resistance) while wearing their masks.

### ***Storage***

Respirators must be stored in a clean, dry area, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Each employee will clean and inspect their own air-purifying respirator in accordance with the provisions of this program and will store their respirator in a plastic bag in their own locker. Each employee will have his/her name on the bag and that bag will only be used to store that employee's respirator.

Each Department and Program will store SCTCC's supply of dust masks, respirators and respirator components in their original manufacturer's packaging in their respective equipment storage areas.

### ***Defective Respirators***

Respirators that are defective or have defective parts shall be taken out of service immediately. If, during an inspection, an employee discovers a defect in a respirator, he/she is to bring the defect to the attention of his or her supervisor. Supervisors will give all defective respirators to the Director of Safety & Security. The Director of Safety & Security will decide whether to:

- Temporarily take the respirator out of service until it can be repaired.
- Perform a simple fix on the spot such as replacing a head strap.
- Dispose of the respirator due to an irreparable problem or defect.

When a respirator is taken out of service for an extended period of time, the respirator will be tagged out of service, and the employee will be given a replacement of similar make, model, and size. All tagged out respirators will be disposed of by the Director of Safety & Security.

## **DOCUMENTATION AND RECORDKEEPING**

A written copy of this program is kept in the Director of Safety & Security's office and is available to all employees who wish to review it.

Also maintained in the Director of Safety & Security's office are copies of fit test records.

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The Director of Safety & Security will also maintain copies of the medical records for all employees voluntarily wearing respirators. The completed medical questionnaire and the physician's documented findings are confidential and will remain with the physician. The Director of Safety & Security will only retain the physician's written recommendation regarding each employee's ability to wear a respirator.

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