



**City of Vernon, California  
Human Resources Policies and Procedures**

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**SUBJECT: VOLUNTARY RESPIRATORY SAFETY EQUIPMENT – NON-SAFETY PERSONNEL**

**PURPOSE:**

To ensure the safe and proper use and maintenance of respirators that are not required under the hazardous exposure limits set by OSHA standards and the training of employees who voluntarily request them. To ensure that the appropriate certified respirator is selected for use to protect against the contaminant of concern.

This policy does not apply to the use of filtering face piece-type respirators (dust masks).

**POLICY:**

With the exception of Police and Fire safety personnel, no employee shall be required to perform or enter areas where (1) engineering control measures are not functional, (2) the employee is required to wear a respirator in order to perform such work, or (3) the atmosphere is otherwise highly hazardous or immediately dangerous to life or health.

The City ensures the safety and well-being of its employees and has determined that at this time there is no work performed that would require the use of a respirator to perform the essential functions of City job tasks (excluding Safety) in accordance with California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 8, Section 5144.

Employees shall refrain from entering any work area or shall immediately evacuate to a safe area and call the Fire Department when engineering controls are not sufficient to reduce respiratory hazards, or atmospheres exceed or fall below exposure limits established by OSHA. Employees shall not enter a work site or perform work until the hazardous situation has been mitigated and safe entry has been established by the Fire Department Hazmat Specialist Team or appropriate designated agency.

However, the City shall consider the purchase and supply of air respirators for employees who want to voluntarily wear a respirator to increase their comfort level when working in a non-hazardous or dusty situation even though the amount of hazardous substance or atmospheric levels that said employees may be exposed to in the course of their duties do not fall outside the limits set by OSHA standards. In these voluntary requests, the department head in consultation with the Human Resources Department shall consider the request and, where appropriate, provide the employee(s) with a respirator to add an additional level of comfort and protection.

### **A. Respirator Selection**

Each department shall determine which respirator is most appropriate for the contaminant's physical form and chemical state and the conditions under which the respirator will be used. All respirators will be selected on the basis of how it will increase the employee's level of comfort when working in a non-hazardous situation. Only MSHA/NIOSH/NLPA Certified respirators will be selected and used.

Respirators must not, to any hazardous degree, impair an employee's vision or hearing or interfere with communication, which can often be critical in performing a job safely.

### **B. Medical Evaluations**

Prior to the use of a respirator, the Human Resources Department shall be responsible for scheduling and coordinating respirator users to be medically evaluated by the City's designated licensed health care professional (LHCP). The medical evaluation shall be at no cost to the employee.

Additional medical evaluations may be required when:

1. An employee reports medical signs or symptoms related to his or her ability to use a respirator.
2. The LHCP, department head or supervisor recommends re-evaluation.
3. Information from the respirator program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need.
4. Change occurs in workplace conditions that may substantially increase the physiological burden on an employee

### **C. Fit Testing**

Each employee shall be provided a fit test administered by an OSHA-accepted Qualitative fit test (QLFT) or a Quantitative fit test (QNFT) protocol, as contained in CCR, Title 8, Section 5144, Appendix A, Fit Testing Procedures (mandatory). The primary purpose of a fit test is to identify the specific make, model, style and size of the respirator that is best suited for each employee. The fit test provides an opportunity to check for problems with respirator use and reinforces respirator training by giving employees an opportunity to review the proper methods for putting on and wearing the respirator.

Fit testing is required before the initial use of a respirator, whenever an employee uses a different respirator face piece, and at least once annually. An additional fit test is required whenever the employee reports changes or the employer or LCHP observes changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respirator fit (i.e., facial scarring, dental changes, cosmetic surgery, or an obvious change in body weight).

Employees who voluntarily request the use of a respirator will receive no additional benefit from the City. Those employees who choose not to use a voluntary respirator will not be adversely impacted by the City. Under the voluntary program, there is no interest by the City whether an employee chooses to use or not use a voluntary respirator.

**D. Use of Respirators**

Once the respirator has been properly selected and fit tested, it is necessary to ensure that the respirator is used properly in the workplace. Employees and supervisors should be aware of the following situations that can compromise the effectiveness of respirators and jeopardize employees' protection.

1. The person wearing the respirator fails to properly perform seal checks.
2. The person wearing the respirator is also using personal protective equipment or other equipment that interferes with the face-to-face piece seal.
3. The respirator is not properly repaired, and its defective parts are not replaced.
4. Modifications are made to the respirator, or non-approved replacement parts are used.

Employees who have facial hair or any condition that interferes with the face-to face piece seal or valve function may not use tight-fitting respirators.

**E. Maintenance and Care of Respirators**

Each department shall designate a staff responsible for the maintenance and care of the department's voluntary respirators. The designated staff shall ensure each respirator user is provided with a respirator that is clean, sanitary, and in good working order. To ensure that the respirator remains serviceable and delivers effective protection, each department shall have a Respiratory Protection Safety Equipment Maintenance Program in place before respirators are used in the workplace. All maintenance programs are required to include information about:

1. Cleaning and disinfecting procedures
2. Proper storage
3. Inspections for defects before each use and during cleaning of a respirator
4. Repair methods.

Cleaning and disinfecting respirators shall be in accordance with the following intervals:

1. Exclusive use respirators – as often as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
2. Shared respirators – before being worn by different persons.

3. Emergency-use respirators – after each use.
4. Respirators used in fit testing and training – after each use.

### **Training**

Respirator users shall be instructed and trained in the proper use and limitations of respirators. Each user shall be trained and must demonstrate an effective knowledge in the following areas:

1. How improper fit, use, or maintenance can compromise the protective effectiveness of the respirator.
2. The capabilities and the limitations of the respirator.
3. How to inspect, put on, remove, and use the respirator and how to check the seals.
4. Procedures for maintaining and storing a respirator.
5. Recognition of the medical signs and the symptoms that may limit or prevent an employee's effective use of a respirator.
6. General requirements of the respirator regulation.

An employee must be trained before he or she can use a respirator unless proof of acceptable training within the past twelve (12) months can be provided. Retraining is required at least annually and when workplace conditions change, when new types of respirators are used, or when inadequacies in the employee's knowledge or use of respirators indicate a need for more training.

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **Responsibility**

#### **Action**

Employee

1. Refrain from entering any hazardous work area or immediately evacuate to a safe area and call the Fire Department when engineering controls are not sufficient or atmospheres fall or exceed exposure limits established by OSHA.
2. Request a voluntary respirator when there is a concern of comfort.

Department Head

3. In consultation with the Human Resources Department, considers employee's(s') request and if approved, coordinates

- medical evaluation with Human Resources Department.
- Human Resources Department
4. Provides necessary examination questionnaire and medical forms to employee and schedules medical evaluation with the City's designated licensed health care professional.
- Department Head or designee
5. Coordinates a fit test administered pursuant to an OSHA-accepted Qualitative fit test (QLFT) or a Quantitative fit test (QNFT) protocol
6. Develops a Respiratory Protection Safety Equipment Maintenance Program and designates staff responsible for the maintenance, care, logging and tracking of each respective department's respirators.
- Department Designee
7. Ensure that each respirator user is provided with a respirator that is clean, sanitary, and in good working order.
8. Ensure that the respirator remains serviceable and delivers effective protection.
9. Ensure that each respirator user receives a copy of the department's Respiratory Protection Safety Equipment Maintenance Program and sign for its receipt.
- Employee
10. Reads and follows all instructions provided under the Department's Respiratory Protection Safety Equipment Maintenance Program on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators' limitations.
11. Keeps track of respirator so that he/she does not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.
12. Participates in annual fit testing and training.