

SUBJECT: RESPIRATOR PROGRAM

The Board of Education of the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE) Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) adopts the following policy to ensure control of occupational diseases caused by breathing contaminated air, specifically transmission of influenza-like illnesses such as the H1N1, by accepted measures of providing, maintaining and utilizing personal protective equipment known as respirators. Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. The BOCES will evaluate the respiratory hazards in the workplace and base respirator selection on relevant factors. Proper respirator use and maintenance is critical to the successful implementation of this respirator policy.

In establishing this policy, the Board seeks to implement a written respiratory protection program with required worksite-specific procedures and elements for required respirator use. As such, the BOCES will appoint a suitably trained program administrator to oversee this program. Administering the program may include, but is not limited to: arranging for training and fit testing sessions, providing employees with the proper respiratory protection; and monitoring OSHA/PESH standards and CDC and DOH recommendations to ensure BOCES compliance.

GENERAL OVERVIEW:

Maintaining the health and safety of our employees is an integral part of this BOCES. As such, the BOCES enforces this policy to protect our school nurses, or other personnel who may be required to wear respirators, by implementing proper care and procedures for the use of respirators.

This policy shall be updated annually or as necessary to reflect changes in the law or workplace conditions affecting respirator use.

The BOCES will establish:

- Procedures for selecting respirators for use in the workplace.
- Fit testing procedures for tight-fitting respirators.
- Procedures for proper use of respirators in routine and reasonably foreseeable emergency situations.
- Procedures and schedules for cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, repairing, discarding and otherwise maintaining respirators.
- Procedures to ensure adequate air quality, quantity and flow of breathing air for atmosphere-supplying respirators.
- Training of employees in the respiratory hazards to which they are potentially exposed during routine and emergency situations.
- Training of employees in the proper use of respirators, including putting on and removing them, any limitations on their use, and their maintenance.
- Procedures for regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the program.
- Where respirator use is not required.
- Process for dealing with requests for respirators or the use of employee's personal respirators.
- Procedures for storing respirators.
- Procedures for respirator inspection.

TRAINING:

The BOCES will, at no cost to the employee, provide respirators, proper training and medical evaluations. The training will be provided before respirator use and annually thereafter. At the very least, the training will provide an effective understanding of:

- Why the respirator is necessary and how improper fit, usage, or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator;
- What the limitations and capabilities of the respirator are;
- How to use the respirator effectively in emergency situations, including situations in which the respirator malfunctions;
- How to inspect, put on and remove, use, and check the seals of the respirator;
- What the procedures are for maintenance and storage of the respirator;
- How to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators;
- Any other pertinent information.

MEDICAL EVALUATIONS:

Medical evaluations will be made, prior to respirator use, to determine an employee's ability to use a respirator in the workplace. Such exam shall occur during normal work hours and/or at a time and place convenient to the employee. The BOCES shall identify a physician or other licensed health care professional to perform medical evaluations using the medical questionnaire provided in Sections 1 and 2, Part A of Appendix C of 29 CFR §1910.134. For any positive response to the medical questionnaire, a follow up medical examination will be provided, inclusive of any medical tests, consultations, or diagnostic procedures necessary to make a final determination. If, at any time, the employer reports signs or symptoms that seemingly prohibit the employee's effective use of a respirator, an additional medical evaluation may be provided. The expense of any such exams will be born by the BOCES.

FIT TESTING:

The employee will be fit tested, according to Appendix A to 29 CFR §1910.134, to an appropriate size respirator to ensure the most effective fit. The employee will be fit tested prior to the initial use of the respirator, whenever a different respirator face piece is used, and at least annually thereafter.

USE OF RESPIRATORS:

The BOCES will implement procedures for the proper use of respirators. These requirements include prohibiting conditions that may result in face piece seal leakage, preventing employees from removing respirators in hazardous, environments and taking actions to ensure continued effective respirator operation throughout the work shift.

Appropriate surveillance shall be maintained of work area conditions and degree of employee exposure or stress. When there is a change in work area conditions or degree of employee exposure or stress that may affect respirator effectiveness, the BOCES shall reevaluate the continued effectiveness of the respirator.

CLEANING AND STORAGE:

The BOCES shall provide each respirator user with a respirator that is clean, sanitary and in good working order. The employer shall ensure that respirators are cleaned and disinfected using the procedures in Appendix B-2 of 29 CFR §1910.134, or procedures recommended by the respirator manufacturer, provided that such procedures are of equivalent effectiveness. Respirators shall be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Respirators shall be accessible to the work area and stored in compartments that are clearly marked as containing emergency respirators. They shall be stored in accordance with any applicable manufacturer instructions in order to prevent them from damage, contamination, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and damaging chemicals. Respirators shall be packed or stored to prevent deformation of the face piece and exhalation valve.

The BOCES shall ensure that respirators are inspected before each use and during cleaning. The inspection shall include a check of respirator function, tightness of connections, and the conditions of the various parts including, but not limited to, the face piece, head straps, valves, connecting tube, and cartridges, canisters or filters, and a check of elastomeric parts for pliability and signs of deterioration.

Any respirators that fail an inspection or are otherwise found to be defective are to be removed from service, and are discarded or repaired or adjusted by appropriately trained personnel.

The BOCES will comply with Appendix's A, B-1, B-2, C and D of 29 CFR §1910.134 in implementing these provisions, copies of which are attached to this policy.

This policy shall remain in full force and effect unless modified by the Board of Education.

29 CFR 1910.134

29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix 1: Fit Testing Procedures

29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix B-1: User Seal Check Procedures

29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix B-2: Respirator Cleaning Procedures

29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix C: OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire

29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix D: Information for Employees Using Respirators When not Required Under Standard

Adopted: April 14, 2010