



Voluntary Use Respiratory Protection

Voluntary Use Requirements

Voluntary use of respiratory protection means that an employee chooses to wear a respirator even though a respirator is not required by the employer or by any OSHA standard. A copy of Appendix D of 1910.134 OSHA Respiratory Protection (second page of this document) must be read and signed by employees who voluntarily use respirators. Detailed information on respiratory protection can be found in the [University Health and Safety \(UHS\) Respiratory Protection Program](#).

NIOSH Certified Respirators

UHS requires the use of NIOSH certified respirators and NIOSH approved filters, cartridges, and canisters for voluntary use. NIOSH certified respirators are clearly marked and use a letter-and-number system specified in 42 CFR Part 84. For an overview of 42 CFR Part 84, see [“Selection and Use of Particulate Respirators.”](#)

Substance Specific Rules

Where OSHA has adopted rules that regulate individual substances such as asbestos and lead, the medical provisions and the respirator-selection requirements (if specified) must be followed instead of OSHA 1910.134 Respiratory Protection. All other aspects of OSHA’s Respiratory Protection standard are applicable. Substance specific standards may not allow provisions for voluntary respiratory protection use.

Evaluation of Respiratory Hazards

It is the employer’s responsibility to evaluate workplace hazards including respiratory hazards. UHS must evaluate respiratory hazards to ensure employees are not exposed. Once it’s established that a respiratory hazard does not exist or exceeds designated occupational limits, voluntary respiratory protection may be used. For evaluation, contact your research safety professional or contact UHS at uhs@umn.edu or (612) 626-6002.

The following table summarizes the requirements for respirators based on the type of voluntary respiratory protection used.

1910.134 Respiratory Protection Requirement	Filtering Face-Piece (dust mask)	Elastomeric Negative Pressure	Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR)	Supplied Air Respirator
Medical Evaluation	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fit Testing	No	No	No	No
Annual Training	No	No	No	No
Appendix D Review and Signature	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Clean, inspect, maintain, store	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



Voluntary Use Respiratory Protection (cont.)

Appendix D to 29 CFR 1910.134: (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encourage, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to be sure the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning, and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

I have read and understand the information provided above.

Employee: _____ **Date:** _____