

It is the intent of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to provide its employees with a safe and healthy work environment. This is accomplished as much as possible through the use of accepted engineering and/or administrative controls. When these controls are not feasible or inadequate, personal protective equipment is provided (respirators) to reduce employee exposure to concentrations of contaminants that will be non-injurious to most individuals. Safe concentration limits were established as standards by regulatory and/or professional organizations.

All campus units whose employees are required to wear a respirator must follow the [University's Respiratory Protection Policy](#) (Policy) and develop unit-specific standard operating procedures using the sample provided in [Appendix D](#) of the Policy. This requirement is based on the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134), which is enforced by the Illinois OSHA.

Required Respiratory Protection

Before any campus unit requires an employee to wear a respirator the following items must be completed:

1. A hazard evaluation must be conducted to ascertain the respiratory hazard and determine the method(s) of control (engineering, administrative, and/or personal protection).
 - Contact the Division of Safety and Compliance Occupational Safety and Health section to conduct a hazard evaluation. Safety and Compliance will make the determination if a respirator is required or if respirator use may be voluntary.
2. Develop standard operating procedures.
 - Sample standard operating procedures are contained in [Appendix D](#) of the Policy.
3. A medical evaluation must be obtained for each employee expected to wear a respirator.
 - [Procedures for obtaining medical clearance](#) are contained within the Policy. There are separate procedures for students and faculty/staff.
 - Initial medical clearance is required before being fit into a respirator.
 - It is recommended that reevaluation of employees occur according to the following age-graded scale (see below) and when there is a change in medical or physical conditions (medical fitness, problems noticed during fit testing, etc.).

Age	Light to Moderate Work	Strenuous Work w/ SCBA
<35yrs	Every 5 years	Every 3 years
35-45yrs	Every 2 years	Every 1.5 years
>45yrs	Every year	Every year

4. Attend **training**
 - Contact the Division of Safety and Compliance Occupational Safety and Health section to conduct or refer your campus unit for training.
 - Training is an annual requirement per OSHA.
5. Fit test into a specific mask.

- Fit testing is designed to check that a specific mask (brand, size, type, etc.) seals properly to protect the employee against respiratory hazards.
- Contact the Division of Safety and Compliance Occupational Safety and Health section to conduct or refer your business unit for fit testing. Fit testing is an annual requirement per OSHA.

Voluntary Use of Respiratory Protection

If the hazard evaluation determines that respirators are not required, but individuals still wish to wear filtering facepieces (“dust masks”) for their own comfort, the Division of Safety and Compliance Occupational Safety and Health section will permit their use as long as the following conditions are met:

1. The respirator does not create a hazard; and
2. Users are provided with the information contained in [Appendix E](#) of the Policy.

Respiratory Protection Inventory Control

Distribution of respiratory protection from campus storerooms should be limited to individuals that are part of a department’s respiratory protection program, either through required use or the voluntary use protocol.

Verification of approval to acquire respiratory protection from a campus storeroom can be through the use of departmental-issued respirator certification cards, current departmental respiratory protection database, copies of current annual respirator fit-test forms, or signed copies of the voluntary use form [Appendix E](#) of the Policy. If a campus unit determines it is unfeasible to verify respirator users in the storeroom, it is recommended that this Fact Sheet be available in the storeroom to individuals procuring respiratory protection.

For additional information please call the Division of Safety and Compliance Occupational Safety and Health section at (217) 265-9828 or email at oshs@illinois.edu.