



ALBUQUERQUE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
PROCEDURAL ORDERS

SOP 2-4

Effective: 05/10/19 Review: 05/10/20 Replaces: 10/25/17

## 2-4 USE OF RESPIRATORS

**Related SOPs:** None

### 2-4-1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide procedures for the training, fitting, use, cleaning and storage of air-purifying respirators issued and used by department personnel. Procedures for Supplied Air Systems are addressed separately in special unit policies and procedures.

### 2-4-2 Policy

Respirators are used to protect employees from inhaling hazardous chemicals and particles in the air. Chemicals can be in the form of gases, vapors, mists. The Department provides respirators to employees to protect them from airborne chemical hazards, and therefore must have a written respiratory protection program. This policy will dictate how the following tasks are accomplished:

- A. How the proper respirators are selected for the particular hazards.
- B. How medical evaluations of respirator wearers are provided.
- C. How respirator fit-testing is done.
- D. Procedures for proper use of respirators in routine and reasonably foreseeable emergencies, such as clandestine lab HAZ-MAT handling, crime scene processing, or riot control situations.
- E. How and when respirators are cleaned, disinfected, stored, inspected and repaired or discarded.
- F. Training of employees in the respiratory hazards to which they are potentially exposed during routine and emergency situations.
- G. Training of employees on the proper use of respirators, including donning & doffing, limitations on their use, and maintenance.
- H. Procedures for regularly evaluating the effectiveness of the respiratory program.
- I. Respirators are typically used in three different situations:
  - 1. Routine or regular exposure to processes or activities involving chemicals.



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2. Infrequent, but predictable occasions where there is chemical exposure.
  3. Emergencies.
- J. This policy will address all these situations if they occur or could occur at an employee's place of work.
- K. Respirator use by employees will be mandatory where respiratory hazards exist, to protect the employee's health.

### 2-4-3 Responsibilities

#### A. Program Administrator

OSHA requires that one person is designated as the "program administrator" who is responsible for the oversight of the program. This person should be reasonably knowledgeable about chemical exposure, respirators and their uses and limitations and will need to keep track of respirator fit-testing, use, storage, cleaning and maintenance.

1. The Department's respirator program administrator is the designated APD Safety Officer.
2. Other responsible supervisors include:
  - a. ERT supervisors
  - b. Tactical Team supervisor.
  - c. Crime Scene Specialist supervisors & Major Crime Scene Team supervisors
  - d. Field Services Bureau supervisors
3. Clandestine Lab Team's specialized procedures and Dive Team procedures for air supplied respirator use will be outlined separately in their respective SOPs.

#### B. Program Administrator Duties

The program administrator will oversee the development of the respiratory program, work with the chain of command of each unit that wears respirators, and make sure it is carried out at the workplace. The administrator will also evaluate the program regularly to make sure procedures are followed, respirator use is monitored and respirators continue to provide adequate protection when job conditions change. Ensure supervisors are trained and approved to conduct fit tests.



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- C. Supervisor Duties Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that the respiratory protection program is implemented in their units. In addition to being knowledgeable about the program, supervisors must ensure that the program is understood and followed by the employees under their charge. Duties of the supervisor include:
1. Ensuring that employees under their supervision have received appropriate training, fit testing, and medical evaluation.
  2. Ensuring the availability of appropriate respirators and accessories.
  3. Being aware of tasks requiring the use of respiratory protection, as well as other necessary Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).
  4. Enforcing the proper use of respiratory protection when necessary.
  5. Ensuring that respirators are properly cleaned, maintained, and stored according to the respiratory protection plan.
  6. Ensuring that respirators fit well and do not cause discomfort.
  7. Continually monitoring work areas and operations to identify possible respiratory hazards.
  8. Coordinating with the program administrator on how to address respiratory hazards or other concerns regarding the program.

D. Employee 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:

1. Care for and maintain their respirators as instructed and store them in a clean, sanitary location.
2. Inform their supervisor if the respirator no longer fits well, and request a new one that fits properly.
3. Inform their supervisor or the program administrator 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.



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4. Inform their supervisor of a need for a medical reevaluation.

## 2-4-4 Procedures

### A. Selection of Respirators

1. Respirators are selected on the basis of the hazards to which the employees are exposed and in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements. Only National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) certified respirators will be selected and used.
2. The Department shall evaluate an employee's exposure to chemicals as per their unit policies and procedures, and provide them with equipment sufficient for their protection.

### B. Medical Evaluations

1. Every employee required to wear a respirator must pass a medical evaluation before being fit tested and permitted to wear a respirator on the job.
2. Medical evaluations will be completed if the employee shows signs or symptoms that affect their ability to wear a respirator.
3. Medical evaluation procedures are as follows:
  - a. The medical evaluation will be conducted by the Employee Health Center using the "Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire" provided to the employee by the Program Administrator, or Employee Health Center.
  - b. The employee will be permitted to fill out the questionnaire in private, and on duty. Completed questionnaires are confidential and will be brought to the evaluation by the employee. It will be given to a medical provider without review by management.
  - c. If the medical questionnaire or evaluation indicates to the Department medical provider that a further medical exam is required, this will be provided by the Department at no cost to employees.
  - d. Additional medical evaluations will be done in the following situations:
    - i. When recommended by the Department medical provider.
    - ii. An employee shows signs of breathing difficulty.
    - iii. Changes in work conditions that increase employee physical stress (such as high temperatures or greater physical exertion).



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- e. The program administrator will get a recommendation from the Department medical provider on whether or not the employee is medically able to wear a respirator.

C. Respirator Fit Testing

1. Employees who are required to wear respirators will be fit tested:
  - a. Prior to being allowed to wear any respirator with a tight fitting face piece
  - b. When there are changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respiratory fit (e.g., significant change in body weight, facial scarring, etc.)
2. Employees will be fit tested with the make, model, and size of respirator that they will actually wear in the field.
3. Employees will be provided with different sizes and available models of respirators so that they may find an optimal fit.
4. Irritant smoke will be used to accomplish the qualitative fit-testing protocol.

D. Fit Testing Procedures

The program administrator shall use procedures consistent with OSHA regulation 1910.134.

E. Employee Responsibilities for Respirator Use:

1. Employees will use their respirators under conditions specified by this program, under the direction of the manufacturer's recommendations, and in accordance with the training they receive on the use of the particular model.
2. Employees will not use the respirator in a manner for which it is not certified by NIOSH or by its manufacturer.
3. The employee must conduct positive or negative pressure user seal checks each time that they wear their respirator.
4. The employee must leave the work area and go to a safe area to maintain their respirator for the following reasons:
  - a. To clean their respirator if the respirator is impeding their ability to work.



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- b. To change filters or cartridges, or replace parts.
- c. To inspect the respirator if it stops functioning as intended.

5. Employees shall, when feasible, notify their supervisor prior to leaving the work area to perform respirator safety checks or maintenance.
6. Employees shall not wear tight-fitting respirators if they have any condition that prevents them from achieving a good seal.
7. Employees shall not wear headphones, jewelry, or other articles that may interfere with the face piece-to-face seal.

F. Cleaning and Maintenance of Respirators

Respirators shall be cleaned, maintained, and disinfected after use in a hazardous environment, and as often as necessary in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.

G. Change Schedule

Employees will change canisters after use in a hazardous environment. In hazardous environments, use of a single canister shall not exceed 8 hours, or 2 hours if the canister is exposed to moisture.

H. Storage of Respirators

1. Respirators must be stored in a cool, clean, secure dry area, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
2. A respirator shall not be stored in a location where it may be exposed to extreme temperatures and direct sunlight.

I. Defective Respirators

1. Respirators that are defective or have defective parts shall be taken out of service immediately. Respirators that are removed from service shall be stored separately or otherwise marked so that they are not inadvertently reissued prior to repairs being conducted.
2. 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.



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3. Supervisors will decide whether to:
  - a. Temporarily take the respirator out of service until it can be repaired.
  - b. Perform a simple fix on the spot such as replacing a head strap.
  - c. Dispose of the respirator due to an irreparable problem or defect.
4. The employee will be given a replacement of same make, model, and size.

J. Respirator Training

1. The Program Administrator will provide training to respirator users and their supervisors on the contents of the Respiratory Protection Program and their responsibilities under it.
2. Workers and Supervisors will be trained prior to using a respirator in the workplace.
3. Supervisors of the specific units within APD will assist the Administrator with training of the specific hazards associated with their special capacities of law enforcement including the Clandestine Lab, Dive Team, SWAT, ERT, CSS, and Field Services Bureau.
4. Employees must demonstrate their understanding of the topics covered in the training.
5. Respirator training will be documented by the Program Administrator and the documentation will include the type, model, and size of respirator for which each employee has been trained and fit tested.

K. Program Evaluation

1. The Program Administrator and Supervisors will conduct periodic evaluations of the workplace to ensure that the provisions of this program are being implemented.
2. The evaluations will include regular consultations with employees who use respirators and their supervisors, site inspections, air monitoring and a review of records.
3. Problems identified will be noted in an inspection log and addressed by the Program Administrator.



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4. These findings will be reported to APD's chain of command, and the report will list plans to correct deficiencies in the respirator program and target dates for the implementation of those corrections.

L. Documentation and Record Keeping

1. A written copy of this program and the OSHA standard is kept in the Program Administrator's office and is available to all employees who wish to review it.
2. Also maintained in the Program Administrator's office are copies of training materials and fit test records. These records will be updated as new employees are trained, as existing employees receive refresher training, and as new fit tests are conducted.
3. The completed medical questionnaire and the physician's documented findings are confidential and will remain at the Employee Health Center. The Administrator will only retain the physician's written recommendation regarding each employee's ability to wear a respirator.