



Office of Environmental Health and Safety
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SAFETY ALERT

No. 04-06

RESPIRATOR USE AND FIT TESTING

MAY 2004

This is to clarify the District's policy regarding respirator use. All District employees required to wear respiratory protective equipment must:

- Pass a medical evaluation by a District physician to determine their ability to wear a respirator.
- Receive training by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety on the proper use, selection and care of respirators.
- Undergo a "fit test" to ensure proper function of a District-issued respirator.
- Maintain a good "respirator to face seal". Facial hair, including stubble, mustaches, sideburns, beards, low hairlines, and bangs between the face and the sealing surface of the respirator will interfere with obtaining a good seal.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) prohibits respirator "fit testing" if there is any hair between the employee's face and the sealing surface of the respirator, or if facial hair (mustache, beard) interferes with respirator valves. Supervisors are required to make sure respirator sealing surface areas are free of hair on a daily basis and that a good face-respirator seal can be obtained for every employee using a respirator.

The failure to pass a medical examination, fit test, or respirator training program will preclude an employee from performing any job that requires use of respiratory protection.

If you have any questions on respirator use or need to schedule respirator training, please contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at (213) 241-3199.

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