

# **SADDLEBACK COLLEGE**

May 20, 2003

(Reviewed November 8, 2007)

## **DIVISION OF MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE & ENGINEERING**

### **Respirator Protection Program**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this operating procedure is to ensure the protection of our employees from respiratory hazards that they may encounter through the proper use of a respirator. Respirators are an effective method of protection against hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged even when exposures are below the Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL), 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 PEL set by Cal/OSHA. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard. Please note that this is a voluntary program.

#### **Responsibility**

The District (Saddleback College, Irvine Valley College) is responsible for this program only in the Division work area and has authority to make decisions to ensure the success of the program. The Dean or his/her designee has the responsibility to halt any operation where danger is perceived to any individuals in a location or work area in the Division where respirators may be used.

#### **Program Elements**

1. The Dean of Mathematics, Science & Engineering will approve the purchase of any respirators or respirator equipment purchased from budget accounts assigned to the Division.
2. Respirators will be selected on the basis of hazards to which Division personnel will be exposed. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packing. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you. Please refer to CCC Title 8, Section 5144.

3. The user will be instructed and trained by an appropriate Safety Officer in the proper use of respirators and their limitations. Training should provide the individual an opportunity to handle the respirator, have it fitted properly, test its facepiece-to-face seal, wear it in normal air for a period to provide familiarity and finally wear it in a test atmosphere. **Retraining will be required annually including fit testing.** The individual may also be required to view any safety videos concerning the proper use of respirators. It will be the discretion of the Dean or designee to determine if retaining at any time is necessary.
4. Respirators should not be worn when conditions prevent a good face seal. Such conditions may include a growth of beard, sideburns, a skull cap that projects under the facepiece or temple pieces on glasses that prevents or breaks the face-to-facepiece seal. To assure proper protection, the facepiece fit will be checked by the wearer each time it is in use. The wearer will perform negative and positive fit checks prior to each use.
5. Respirators will be assigned to individuals for their exclusive use. Keep track of your respirator and appropriate cartridges so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.
6. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations. Respirators will be cleaned after each use.
7. Respirators will be stored in a sealed plastic bag in a safe and accessible location.
8. Respirators will be routinely inspected prior to and after use by the wearer. Worn or deteriorated parts will be replaced.
9. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designated 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. Please note: Organic vapor cartridges may contain activated charcoal and has a finite self life with an expiration date. Dispose of charcoal cartridges if they exceed the expiration date. In addition, respirator wearers should date their cartridges with indelible ink upon each new use.
10. Persons will not be assigned to tasks requiring the use of respirators unless it has been determined that they are physically able to perform the work and use of the equipment. This will require an annual spirometry test as needed. If any person knows of any physical condition that would interfere with the use of the respirator, that persons must notify the Dean or designee. No one will be required to use any respirator that he/she feels unable to use in a safe manner.

11. South Orange County Community College District will not assume responsibility for the physical condition of any person using a respirator. If an individual is uncertain about his or her physical health or condition, that individual must consult their Dean or Risk Management prior to the use of a respirator.
12. South Orange County Community College District will retain written information regarding medical evaluations, fit testing, and the respirator program. This information will facilitate employee involvement in the respirator program, assist SOCCCD in auditing the adequacy of the program, and provide a record for compliance determinations by Cal/OSHA.
13. Reference is made to the South Orange County Community College District Respirator Protection Program that was written over a year ago. (Revised: May 15, 2006).

I have read, understood and complied, where appropriate, with all aspects of the Respirator Protection Program provide by the South Orange County Community College District.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
witness (Dean, MSE or designee)

\_\_\_\_\_  
date