



## Respirator Selection and Use Process

Respiratory Protection is the last line of defense against inhalation of hazardous air contaminants or entry into low oxygen environments. Environmental Health and Safety, 216 Browning Hall

1. **Determine if/what contaminants are present.** Different contaminants require different types of respirators and filters, so it is important to identify the contaminants in order to select appropriate respirator for the task(s) and employee. For assistance with this determination, contact [Ashley Koehler](#) at 901.678.2740 or [Al Simpson](#) at 901.678.4672.
2. **Select appropriate respirator(s) for the task(s) and employee.** With guidance from EH&S, select appropriate respirator(s). Respirators can be ordered from Grainger or other safety equipment vendors through TlgerBuy.
3. **Develop a Respiratory Protection Program.** A program must be written and implemented in accordance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. A model program template is available from EH&S.
4. **Ensure that employees are medically evaluated and cleared for respirator use.** Complete the [Notice of Intent to Use Occupational Health Services \(OHS\)](#) to request medical evaluations for employees. This Notice must be completed by a supervisor and will start the medical evaluation process. Multiple employees can be listed on the same form.
  - During this process, the employee will be asked to complete an OSHA Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire. This form is required and must be completed by the employee. It is vital that the employee is knowledgeable about the contaminant(s) and respirator(s) that he/she will be using, as the questionnaire references both.
  - All medical evaluations must be completed during the employee's normal working hours. Employees must be provided with transportation to UTHSC or compensated for taking a personal vehicle.
  - Employees wearing a respirator on a voluntary use basis are not required to be medically evaluated. Contact EH&S for other requirements.
5. **Ensure employees receive respirator training.** Training must include the following topics: Why you need a respirator; what the respirator can and cannot do to protect you; how to properly inspect, put on and take off, and use your respirator; how to check the seal of your respirator (also called a "user seal check"); how to use the respirator effectively in emergency situations, including situations in which the respirator doesn't work properly; how to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent you from using a respirator; how improper fit, usage, or maintenance can reduce your respirator's ability to protect you; what the procedures are for maintenance and storage of the respirator; and what the requirements are for [OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard](#).

All employees wearing a respirator, including voluntary use, must receive training. Training must be provided before using the respirator and annually thereafter. The employee must bring his/her assigned respirator to receive credit. To receive training from EH&S, contact [Ashley Koehler](#) at 901.678.2740.

6. **Ensure employees are fit tested.** Each employee wearing a respirator, including voluntary use, must be fit tested before the first use of the respirator(s), and annually thereafter. To schedule a fit test from EH&S, contact [Ashley Koehler](#) at 901.678.2740.