



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, DC

Responsible University Official: Senior Associate Vice President for Safety and Security

Responsible Office: Division of Safety and Security

Last Revised Date: March 16, 2017

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the university to support the protection of employees from respiratory injury as a result of working with harmful dusts, fumes, gases, vapors, and other hazardous airborne substances, and to promote respiratory safety through the use of engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment as detailed in the university’s Respiratory Protection Program.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to support the protection of employees from respiratory hazards, injuries, and illnesses, and to comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1910.134).

Who is Governed by this Policy

Faculty, staff and students

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Policy

OSHA sets Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) for respiratory hazards. PELs are regulatory limits on the amount or concentration of a substance in the air. If levels above the PEL are detected the exposure must be reduced to the acceptable PEL.

Health & Emergency Management Services has developed procedures and guidelines in the Respiratory Protection Program to assist in protecting employees from respiratory hazards in accordance with OSHA standards and best practices.

Respirator requirements are dependent upon the type of operations and the toxicity and concentration of the substances in use. All respirator use is assessed on a case-by-case basis. Health & Emergency Management Services conducts hazard assessments to determine whether respirators are required for the health and safety of faculty and staff.

If Health & Emergency Management Services determines that a respirator is mandatory, the employee must obtain a medical evaluation and a fit test at the university's expense prior to using the respirator. If an employee chooses to voluntarily wear an approved respirator that is not required by Health & Emergency Management Services, the employee must also receive a medical evaluation and a fit test prior to respirator use. Medical evaluations for voluntary use of a respirator must be obtained at the employee's expense.

Health & Emergency Management Services coordinates annual medical evaluations, fit testing, and respirator training. Academic departments should contact the Office of Health and Safety with regard to all matters concerning respiratory protection to include equipment, information, and training for students.

Departments are responsible for properly inspecting, maintaining, cleaning, disinfecting, and storing all respirators after each use in accordance with Health & Emergency Management Services training.

Related Information

Respiratory Protection Program

[OSHA Respiratory Protection Regulations, 29 C.F.R. § 1910.134](#)

Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email
Health & Emergency Management Services	(202) 994-4347	safety@gwu.edu

Document History

- **Last Reviewed Date:** April 25, 2017
- **Last Revised Date:** March 16, 2017
- **Policy Origination Date:** 1994

Who Approved This Policy

Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer
Beth Nolan, Senior Vice President and General Counsel

This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance and Privacy's](#) home page.