



GENERAL MANUAL POLICY

APPROVED BY:



Executive Director

CATEGORY: Health & Safety

TOPIC: Respirator Protection Program

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POLICY

Community Living Thunder Bay (CLTB) is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its staff and all those who receive supports and services through CLTB. To adequately protect the health and safety of all CLTB staff, volunteers, or students coming into contact with a respiratory hazard, a Respiratory Protection Program including measures and procedures for the purpose of mask fit testing, will be followed.

1. PURPOSE

The Respiratory Protection Program is meant to increase the awareness of respiratory hazards in the workplace and to inform employees, students and volunteers of the means available to protect themselves and others from such hazards.

Through the Respiratory Protection Program, CLTB is committed to providing a safe, healthy and supportive working environment specifically as it relates to respiratory protection, as well as abide by the Government of Ontario Ministry of Labour orders issued under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, in regard to the use of N95 respirators. Through the Program, CLTB will make every reasonable effort to identify where respiratory hazards exist and make N95 mask fit testing available in the workplace in order to eliminate and/or minimize the risk.

This program is developed to adequately protect the health and safety of all employees, students, and volunteers coming into contact with a respiratory hazard. In addition, this program is meant to increase the awareness of respiratory hazards in the workplace and to inform employees, students, or volunteers of the means available to protect themselves and others from such hazards.

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2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The respirator protection policy requires the following for the proper use of respirators: Respirators are issued to individuals for protection against airborne contaminant(s) and only after completion of required health screening questionnaire, training, and practical fit test. Respirators do not work properly unless they fit the wearer. The quality of respirator fit is determined by the seal where the respirator meets the wearer's face. All CLTB staff, students, and volunteers who wear a N95 respirator must be individually fitted to determine which models of N95 respirators provide the best protection. A fit test shall be used to determine the ability of each individual respirator wearer to obtain a satisfactory fit with a respirator. The wearer must successfully pass the fit test before being issued a respirator.

All persons required to use respirators will use them in accordance with the instructions received. The user will take all necessary measures to care for the respirator provided and will report any damage or malfunctions to his or her immediate supervisor.

Respirator Users must:

- Wear appropriate respiratory protection at all times when performing tasks or working in an area where respiratory hazards exist;
- Inspect the respirator prior to each use in accordance with the training received;
- Use the respirator in accordance with the written instructions and training received.
- Report any damage or malfunction of the respirator to their Supervisor;
- Report to their Supervisor/Health & Safety Advisor any condition or change that may impact their ability to use a respirator safely;
- When using an N95 respirator, be clean shaven and ensure that no object or material interferes with the seal or operation of the respirator;
- Understand the limitations associated with the use of respiratory protection.

3. PROCEDURE

The purpose of a respirator fit test is to verify the user's ability to obtain an effective seal and acceptably comfortable fit for the selected respirator. This process also serves to verify that a respirator user is able to demonstrate the required level of competency in donning and doffing the respirator and performing a respiratory inspection as well as a seal check. The selection of a respirator must be based on adequate protection, proper fit and comfort. Employees are to be shown how the respirator is properly positioned on the face, how the strap tension should be set, as well as how to determine a proper fit of the respirator. Respirators shall not be worn when conditions prevent a good face seal. For this reason, employees, students and volunteers required to wear respirators as part of their job must remain clean shaven. The fit test shall be performed only on employee, student, and volunteer who are clean-shaven where the facepiece seals to the skin. Individuals that are not clean-shaven will not be fit-tested.

When an employee, student, volunteer is required to wear other personal protective equipment, such as eye, face, head and hearing protection during their course of work, the same protective

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equipment shall be worn during the fit test to ensure that they are compatible with the respirator and do not break the facial seal.

The initial stages of this process will begin with a health screening questionnaire, completed by the employee, student or volunteer. Based on the overall health of the individual, it will be determined whether or not the individual will be restricted from wearing respiratory protective equipment. Employees, students and volunteers shall not be assigned to tasks requiring the use of respirators unless it has been determined that they do not have restrictions preventing them from safely performing duties while wearing the respirator.

If a health concern exists regarding the use of a respirator then the employee, student or volunteer should obtain an opinion from a health care professional regarding their ability to use a respirator. Such opinion shall be obtained prior to the use of the respirator or if a change in condition warrants an additional opinion. If a medical restriction is applied, the employee, student or volunteer, should immediately notify their Supervisor and Human Resources of their inability to do so and request accommodation.

A fit test shall be carried out:

- prior to initial use of a tight-fitting respirator
- at least every 2 years
- whenever there is a change in available respirators (make, model, or size)
- when a respirator user experiences continued significant discomfort during use or difficulty in completing a successful user seal check
- if there is a change in PPE use that could affect the respirator
- whenever there is a change in the worker's physical condition that could affect respirator fit. Such conditions include, but not limited to:
 - facial scarring
 - dental changes
 - cosmetic surgery
 - obvious change in body weight
 - facial rash (dermatological condition)

Respirators must not be worn for any other purpose without the knowledge and approval of the supervisor and Human Resources. Clean shaven means that the employee, student or volunteer has no beard or shadow that will prevent the respirator to make a smooth seal with the face. No employee will be allowed to wear a respirator or be fit tested unless the shaving requirement has been met. A seal check must be conducted by the user prior to respirator use.

Individual respirators are provided to each employee requiring a respirator. Employees, students and volunteers shall not share respirators. In addition, the respirator shall not be altered in any manner.

4. DOCUMENTATION

Prior to the fit test, the employee, volunteer, student and supervisor must complete Respirator Health Screening Form.

The person performing the fit test shall record the details of the fit test during the procedure. Respirator fit testing documentation shall include the type of respirator, model, test results, test date and the name of the tester. The tested individual shall sign this fit test record. A copy will be maintained by the Human Resources and by the tested individual. A copy of each employee's fit test record shall be kept on file for at least two years following fit testing. In addition, written recommendations regarding an employee, student or volunteer's ability to wear a respirator will be retained.

When complete a respirator fit-test card will be issued to an employee/worker upon successful completion of the fit-test. The fit-test card indicates the respirator manufacturer, model, size, and expiry date. An employee, student, or volunteer must only use the specific respirator (same manufacturer, model, and size) they were fit tested with.