

Madawaska Valley

Association For

Community Living

**POLICY: RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

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**Policy Statement:**

Madawaska Valley Association for Community Living (MVACL) Respiratory Protection Program is designed to maximize protection afforded by respirators when they must be used.

Assignment of Responsibility:

Employer

MVACL is responsible for providing respirators to employees when they are necessary for health protection. MVACL will provide respirators that are applicable and suitable for the intended purpose.

Program Administrator:

The Program Administrator for MVACL is the Health and Safety Management Lead. The Program Administrator is responsible for administering the respiratory protection program.

Managers;

Managers are responsible for ensuring that the respiratory protection program is implemented in their particular programs. In addition to being knowledgeable about the program requirements for their own protection, Managers must also ensure that the program is understood and followed by the employees under their charge.

Employees:

Each employee is responsible for wearing his or her respirator when and where required and in the manner in which they are trained.

Applicability:

This program applies to all employees who are required to wear respirators during normal work operations.

Program:

Hazard Assessment and Respirator Selection

The Program Administrator will select respirators to be used on site, based on the hazards to which workers are exposed and with what is available. The Program Administrator will notify programs when an outbreak has been determined or when Renfrew County District Health Unit (RCDHU) advises MVACL to use respirators.

Training:

The Program Administrator and/or FIT Testers will provide training to respirator users and their Managers on the contents of the MVACL Respiratory Protection Program and their responsibilities under it. All affected employees and their Managers will be trained prior to using a respirator in the workplace. Managers will also be trained prior to supervising employees that must wear respirators.

Training will include the following:

* The specific circumstances under which respirators are to be used.
* Respirator hazards to which employees are potentially exposed during routine and emergency situations.
* Why the respirator is necessary and how proper fit, usage, and maintenance can ensure the protective effect of the respirator as well as how improper fit, usage or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator.
* The limitations and capabilities of the respirators that will be used.
* How to inspect, put on, remove, use, and check the seals of the respirator (for tight-fitting respirators such as N95 filtering facepiece respirators). Specific safe donning and doffing techniques will be taught when respirators must be reused.
* The procedures outlined in this program for maintenance, storage, and cleaning or disposal of respirators.

Employees will be retrained annually or as needed and will have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement. Respirator training will be documented by the Program Administrator and the documentation will include the type, model, and size of respirator for which each employee has been trained and fit tested.

Medical Evaluation:

Before being FIT tested each employee will fill out a FIT Testing Health Questionnaire (see Appendix A). This form will help determine if a referral to a Medical Professional is required before wearing a Respirator.

If it is deemed by the FIT tester that a referral to Health Care Professional is required the employee will take FIT Testing Health Assessment Form (see Appendix B) to be filled out by their Health Care Professional.

Fit Testing:

Employees who are required to wear tight fitting air purifying respirators will be fit tested:

* prior to being allowed to wear any respirator with a tight-fitting face piece
* annually or
* when there are changes in the employee’s physical condition that could affect respiratory fit (e.g., obvious change in body weight, facial scarring, etc.).

Employees will be fit tested with the make, model, and size of respirator that they will actually wear. Employees will be provided with several models and sizes of respirators so that they may find an optimal fit. NOTE: This may not be feasible during times of respirator shortages, such as during a pandemic. In those cases, MVACL will follow guidance form the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and/or RCDHU.

Designated FIT Testers will conduct fit tests in accordance with the Public Services Health and Safety Association program. N95 respirators will be fit tested with a qualitative fit test protocol using an aerosol solution of either saccharin or Bitrex®.

If someone cannot pass the FIT testing process or they are not cleared by a Health Care Professional to wear a respirator, accommodation will be made for the employee to be moved temporally to a location that does not require the use of a respirator.

Proper Care of Respirators:

Dispose of respirators after use with infectious bioaerosols. Replace respirators when they become damaged, soiled, or unhygienic. Employees, Managers and the Program Administrator must be aware of time use restrictions specified by the manufacturer for each specific respirator.

Program Evaluation:

The Program Administrator and/or Managers will conduct periodic evaluations of the workplace to ensure that the provisions of this program are being implemented. The evaluations will include regular consultations with employees who use respirators and their supervisors, site inspections, air monitoring and a review of records.

Documentation and Recordkeeping:

1. A written copy of this program and the PSHSA guidelines shall be kept in the Program Administrator’s office and made available to all employees who wish to review it.

2. Copies of Training and FIT Test Records Forms for each staff shall be maintained by the Program Administrator. These records will be updated as new employees are trained, as existing employees receive refresher training, and as new fit tests are conducted.