

## **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

**1729**

(No. 25 June 2000)

Employees will be provided with and required to wear the appropriate respiratory protection equipment when working in atmospheres that:

- Are immediately dangerous to life and health.
- Are suspected to be hazardous.
- Are not immediately dangerous to life and health; however, they may produce immediate physical discomfort or chronic poisoning.

## **RESPIRATOR USAGE**

**1729.1**

(No. 25 June 2000)

Hazardous atmospheres that require the use of a respirator include circumstances when employees are working in or likely to be exposed to:

- Any oxygen deficient atmosphere. (See Handbook Section 1729.2.)
- Gas, vapor, particulate containments, or chemicals of such concentration or duration to cause injury.

Non-emergency and/or project work situations requiring the use of a respirator include but are not limited to:

- Pesticide application.
- Herbicide application.
- Spray painting.
- Any chemical handling when recommended by the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

Situations requiring the use of a pressure-demand, self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) include but are not limited to:

- Entering an oxygen deficient atmosphere.
- Entering a burning building.
- Entering a confined space.

- Working a vehicle fire.
- Working in hazardous smoke other than a wildfire (e.g. disposal/refuse dump area fire).
- Operating bulldozers in smoke containing hazardous materials (e.g. disposal/refuse dump area).

## **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION STANDARDS**

**1729.2**

(No. 25 June 2000)

Respiratory protection equipment and the use of respirators must meet the applicable minimum requirements of California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 8 (T8), Section 5144, with additional requirements for fire suppression personnel in Section CCR, T8, 3409.

## **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PLAN**

**1729.3**

(No. 25 June 2000)

A written respiratory protection plan with worksite-specific procedures is required whenever respirators are required or in any workplace where respirators are necessary to protect the health of the employee. Unit managers are responsible for requiring the development, implementation, and use of a written respiratory protection plan. The plan should include respirator use during non-emergency and project work, as well as respiratory protection (SCBAs) for emergency personnel. CAL FIRE's Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP) has a respiratory protection plan that will meet this requirement.

The plan shall include procedures on:

- Criteria for selecting respirators
- Medical evaluations (See Handbook Section 1827)
- Fit testing
- Proper use of respirators
- Schedules for cleaning, maintenance, storage, repairing, and discarding
- Air quality/quantity and flow
- Training on respiratory hazards
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the program

**NOTE: for the details of the above-mentioned sections, please refer to [CCR, Title 8, Section 5144](#).**

## **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PLAN FOR NON-EMERGENCY AND PROJECT WORK HAZARDS**

**1729.3.1**

(No. 25 June 2000)

A written plan for non-emergency and project work respirator use must be prepared by the unit and include:

- The assignment of a knowledgeable and suitably trained person to administer the respiratory protection plan.
- A procedure that ensures the proper respiratory equipment is provided for the airborne hazards encountered by employees.
- A procedure requiring employees using respirators to be trained in the use of the equipment. The training must include why the respiratory protection is necessary, the equipment's limitations, sanitary care, respirator fit, use and operation, as well as procedures for emergency situations involving respirator use.
- A monitoring procedure that ensures respirators are used and maintained properly by employees.

## **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PLAN FOR EMERGENCY PERSONNEL**

**1729.3.2**

(No. 25 June 2000)

A written plan for SCBA use by emergency personnel must be prepared by the unit and include:

- A procedure for employee training which includes instruction in the proper use and limitations of SCBAs.
- A procedure for cleaning and sanitizing SCBAs after each use, except when impracticable under tactical conditions.
- A procedure for proper storage.
- A list of SCBA user responsibilities that requires users to inspect, use, and maintain the SCBA according to training and instructions received; users shall guard against SCBA damage and report any malfunction to their supervisor.

## **RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

**1729.4**

(No. 25 June 2000)

One person from each Unit, the Fire Academy, and Sacramento Headquarters will be designated as a Respiratory Protection Program Administrator (RPPA). Area Offices will be coordinated with the local Unit RPPA. The RPPA must be qualified by experience or appropriate training that is commensurate with the complexity of the program.

## **RESPIRATOR SELECTION**

**1729.5**

(No. 25 June 2000)

Respirators are selected on the basis of hazards to which the employee is exposed. The RPPA makes all selections. Only respirators certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) will be selected and used.

## **MEDICAL EVALUATION/EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS**

**1729.6**

(No. 25 June 2000)

Any employee who would or could use a tight-fitting respirator must first be medically cleared before they can be fit-tested. See Handbook Section 1827 (see section) for the procedures and policies for medical clearance.

## **FIT TESTING REQUIREMENTS**

**1729.7**

(No. 68 February 2008)

Employees using a tight-fitting respirator are required to be fit tested; prior to initial use of the respirator; whenever a different respirator (make, model, style, or size) is used, and at least annually thereafter.

- Fit testing procedures shall be done in accordance with CCR, T8, Section 5144 (f)(5) and Appendix A.
- The initial Qualitative Fit Testing (QLFT) protocol will be conducted with BITREX\*.
- If an employee fails the BITREX\* sensitivity test, use the Saccharin solution QLFT Protocol. It is not to be used as the initial test solution.

- Fit testing coordinators and fit testers are required to identify the type of fit testing enclosure used for each employee (QLFT protocols only); the fit test solution used (QLFT protocols only); and the specific equipment used for Qualitative Fit Testing (QNFT) protocols.
- Any (QNFT) protocol is acceptable, and can be used as the initial fit testing protocol or when an employee fails the sensitivity test to BITREX\* and/or Saccharin.
- Employees who successfully pass the fit test will receive a fit test card indicating the make and model of the tight-fitting mask(s) and/or facepiece(s) that they were tested in and the size of the mask/facepiece. The card shall also include the expiration date. Fit testing is required on an annual basis and must be conducted before the expiration date on the card.
- Employees who do not successfully pass the fit test will be medically examined to determine their ability to wear a tight-fitting respirator.
- In the event that no available make, model, style or size mask/facepiece provides a positive fit test, the department will provide a mask at no expense to the employee.
- Additional fit testing shall be conducted when there are physical changes in an employee that could affect respirator fit.
- The RPPA shall be responsible for maintaining the fit testing records.
- If an employee wears a medical respirator for protection against M. Tuberculosis (TB), or other airborne communicable disease exposures, they need to be fit tested annually in the same manner as all other tight fitting respirators as per CCR, Title 8, Section 5144.

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