Respiratory protection programs will be established to regulate the use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment to (1) reduce employee exposure to toxic chemical agents; (2) allow employees to work safely in potentially hazardous work environments; and (3) maintain compliance with state and federal safety laws.

Whenever possible, mechanical methods (such as exhaust ventilation) should be used to minimize employee exposure to potentially hazardous chemical substances. However, for certain situations or operations, the use of mechanical controls may not be feasible or practical. Under these circumstances, or during an interim while mechanical systems are being developed or installed, the use of personal protective respiratory equipment may be necessary. Therefore, a sound and effective program is essential to assure that the personnel using such equipment are adequately protected.

Employees wearing respirators must be covered under an approved Department of Labor respirator program. Such a program must have written procedures and practices including medical monitoring of the employee, fit testing, training, and recordkeeping.

Employees who elect to wear dusk masks in environments that do not contain regulated levels of contamination may do so with their supervisors’ permission after being provided with a copy of OSHA Respiratory Protection Appendix D found at: [http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9784](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9784). Departments will provide at no cost to employees appropriately rated N95 masks. Use of bandanas or other homemade respirators is prohibited when an employee voluntarily elects to use respiratory protection for nuisance dust levels.

**It is critical that voluntary-use employees understand that disposable N95 respirators provide limited or no protection for toxic or hazardous atmospheres and that they must review and understand**
the material presented in Appendix D as referred to in the preceding paragraph.

No additional requirements as described in the subsequent sections of this policy apply to voluntary use of nuisance dusk masks.

Program Characteristics

The characteristics of a properly managed respiratory protection program include:

- Proper respirator fitting.
- Regular equipment inspection and repair.
- Protective storage.
- Working procedures and assignment of responsibilities.
- Required medical approvals.
- Effective and appropriate training.
- Regular program evaluation.

Program Responsibilities

Departments with respiratory hazard exposures are responsible for establishing and managing a respiratory protection program. The nature and formality of the program will depend on the scope of the exposure.

Supervisors will ensure the respirators are provided when they are necessary to protect the health of the employee, are suitable for the intended purpose, are properly maintained, are a proper fit, and the employees are properly trained in their use.
Employees will use the respiratory protection in accordance with instructions and training received. Each employee will be responsible for cleaning, inspecting, and making minor repairs on his/her respirator, if necessary, in accordance with instruction and training received.

EHS/RMS (786-1351 or ayssg@uaa.alaska.edu) will:

1. Advise departments on program design.
2. Assist departments with respirator selection.
3. Provide fitting guidelines.
4. Develop and provide periodic training for respirator users.
5. Evaluate department programs for the cleaning and maintenance of respirator equipment.
6. Evaluate storage areas for respirator equipment.
7. Review issuance and use records for the equipment.
8. Assure that medical approval has been obtained for each user.
9. Inspect equipment at regular intervals.
10. Evaluate atmospheres or work conditions to determine the need for respiratory protection.

More information on respiratory protection procedures is available at UAA EHS/RMS Procedure 9, Respiratory Protection.