



SAFE.FITTESTING.1.0

POLICY FOR RESPIRATOR SELECTION AND FIT TESTING

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

It is the policy of Mid America Clinical Laboratories to provide its employees with a safe and healthful work environment. The guidelines in this policy are designed to help reduce employee exposure to occupational air contaminants. The primary objective is to prevent excessive exposure to these contaminants. This is accomplished as far as feasible by accepted engineering and work practice control measures. It will be the policy of Mid America Clinical Laboratories to mandate the use of respiratory protection in those area where administrative and environmental controls do not eliminate all risk of exposure. In the United States, where respirators are in use in the workplace, a formal respiratory protection program must be established covering the basic requirements outlined in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134)

SCOPE

This policy applies to those associates who work in the Microbiology department at the Regional Facility (more specifically those involved with the specimens and cultures for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) and other associates as deemed necessary by risk assessment.

OWNERS

- Director Regulatory Affairs
- Manager of Microbiology

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- SAFE.FITTESTING.2.0 Fit Testing
- SAFE.FITTESTING.2.1 Medical Questionnaire
- SAFE.FITTESTING.2.2 Employee Respirator Fit Testing Record
- SAFE.FITTESTING.2.3 Safety Department Respirator Fit Testing Record Summary
- SAFE.FITTESTING.2.4 Respirator Training Certification



POLICY FOR RESPIRATOR SELECTION AND FIT TESTING

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Management

It is the responsibility of management to determine the specific applications requiring respiratory protective equipment. Management must also provide proper respiratory protective equipment to meet the needs of each associate along with adequate training and instructions on respirator use. Management will ensure the completion of a medical questionnaire and FIT test prior to the employee beginning work which requires the use of a respirator.

2. Employees

It is the responsibility of the employee to have an awareness of the respiratory protection requirements for their work areas. Employees will be responsible for completing the required medical questionnaire and submit for a FIT test. Employees are also responsible for wearing the appropriate respiratory protective equipment according to proper instructions.

3. Medical Director

It is the responsibility of the Medical Director to review the submitted confidential medical questionnaire and determine if there are any medical concerns or impediments to the associate wearing the respirator and/or submitting for the FIT test. The Medical Director will notify the Safety Department to perform FIT testing by completing the appropriate section on the Employee FIT Testing Record.

4. Human Resources

It is the responsibility of Human Resources to maintain the confidential medical questionnaire in the employee personnel file. OSHA requires the medical questionnaire be maintained for 30 years after termination of employment. The Human Resources and Safety Departments will coordinate alternative FIT testing, and/or medical examination with Occupational Health Services if deemed necessary by the Medical Director.

5. Safety Department

It is the responsibility of the Director Regulator Affairs and designees in the Safety Department to coordinate the FIT testing program. The Safety Department will provide management with training materials, assist with the evaluation of job duties and respirator selection, and perform FIT testing as directed by the Medical Director. The Safety Department will ensure the completion of annual FIT testing.



POLICY FOR RESPIRATOR SELECTION AND FIT TESTING

MATERIALS

Respirator Selection

- A respirator will be made available to each employee assigned to an area requiring respiratory protection from *M. tuberculosis*. Replacement respirators will be made available as needed.
- Particulate filter respirators certified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) that can be used for protection against airborne *M. tuberculosis* include non-powered disposable respirators with N95, N99, and N100 filters. Respirators meeting NIOSH approval will be selected and approved for use by management.

USE OF RESPIRATORS

- N95 tight fitting respirators are to be used in the general daily routine in the Acid Fast area of the microbiology department when working with patient specimens submitted for mycobacterial culture, and when handling culture media which support the growth of mycobacterial organisms. All associates present in the Acid Fast area are to be in compliance with respirator use when patient specimens and/or cultures are being handled or manipulated. These respirators will also be used as deemed necessary by risk assessment in other departments.
- N100 tight fitting respirators will be used if a spill occurs in the Acid Fast area of the microbiology department.
- Tight fitting respirators shall not be used with beards, facial hair, or any other condition that prevents direct contact between the face and the edge of the respirator. Associates will be informed of this policy prior to assignment of duties requiring the use of a respirator.
- Associates will be required to leave the contaminated area when:
 - There is a malfunction of the respirator
 - If increased breathing resistance of the respirator is noted
 - Upon illness of the respirator wearer, including: sensation of dizziness, nausea, weakness, breathing difficulty, coughing sneezing, vomiting, fever and chills

RESPIRATOR TRAINING AND FITTING

1. TRAINING

- Associates assigned to jobs requiring respirators will be instructed by their manager or designee in the respirator protection program.
- Training instructions will include:
 - Need, use, limitations, and care of their respirator.
 - Physical or health changes which could affect the ability to properly wear the selected respirator.



POLICY FOR RESPIRATOR SELECTION AND FIT TESTING

- Documentation of training will be maintained in the employee's department file. (form SAFE.FITTESTING.2.4)

2. MEDICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

- Associates assigned to duties requiring respirators will complete a medical questionnaire when initially assigned to determine if there are any limitations to their ability to wear a respirator.
- The medical questionnaire will be confidential and reviewed by the Medical Director. Reviewed questionnaires will be filed in the associate confidential personnel file maintained in Human Resources.
- The Safety Department will be notified to perform FIT testing on those associates deemed capable of wearing the selected respirator.
- Associates determined to have limitations to wearing the selected respirator will not be assigned duties requiring respiratory protection.

To maintain employee confidentiality, the following procedure will be in place for the completion and submission for review of the medical questionnaire.

A. Completion of Medical Questionnaire

1. Department Manager

- a. Provide the associate the medical questionnaire and an addressed envelope which can be sealed. (form SAFE.FITTESTING.2.1)
- b. Provide the associate time to complete the questionnaire during normal working hours.

2. Associate

- a. Complete the medical questionnaire.
- b. Place the form in the envelope and affix the confidential seal.
- c. Return sealed envelope to Department Manager.

B. Submission of Medical Questionnaire

1. Department Manager

- a. Forward sealed envelope containing the medical questionnaire and Employee Respirator FIT Testing Record (form SAFE.FITTESTING.2.2) to the Medical Director.

2. Medical Director

- a. Review the medical questionnaire to determine if there are any impediments to the associate wearing a respirator or completing the FIT testing.
- b. Complete the Medical Director section of the Employee Respirator FIT Testing Record indicating approval/denial of associate to wear the respirator and submit for FIT testing.



POLICY FOR RESPIRATOR SELECTION AND FIT TESTING

- c. Forward confidential medical questionnaire to Human Resources for filing in the associate personnel file.
- d. Return the Employee Respirator FIT Testing Record to submitting Department Manager.

3. FIT TESTING

- Associates will be properly fitted and tested for face seal prior to respirator use. FIT testing will be conducted according to federal regulation 29 CFR 1910.134 (SAFE.FITTESTING.2.0)
- Fit testing will be done initially upon the associate assignment to an area where tight – fitting respirators are required. Fit testing will be repeated at least every 12 months thereafter.
 - NOTE: Repeat medical questionnaires are not required, but may be repeated by request of the associate due to health changes which may affect their ability to wear the selected respiratory protection.
- Fit testing will not be done on associates with facial hair that passes between the respirator seal and the face. Such facial hair includes stubble, beards and long sideburns.
 - NOTE: Respirators should not be used when facial hair is present that could prevent direct contact between the face and the edge of the respirator.

A. Determination of FIT Testing performance

- 1. Department Manager will review the Medical Director completed Employee Respirator FIT Testing Record

IF	THEN
Associate cleared for FIT testing	Forward Employee Respirator FIT Testing Record form to the Safety Department to schedule FIT testing.
Associate not cleared for FIT testing	Employee will not be assigned to duties requiring respirator protection. NOTE: "Failure" to be cleared using the medical questionnaire indicates only that additional clarification or follow-up may be needed, it does not necessarily exclude an associate from eventual FIT testing and assignment of duties requiring respiratory protection. The OSHA Respirator Standard requires employers to provide follow-up examinations for these employees, ONLY IF duties requiring respiratory protection will be assigned.



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REFERENCES

- 29 CFR 1910.134
- 3M™ Administrative Respiratory Protection Program Guide
- OSHA 3384-09 2011 Small Entity Compliance Guide for the Respiratory Protection Standard
- OSHA 3352-02 2009 Assigned Protection Factors for the Revised Respiratory Protection Standard