



# Respiratory Protection Program

Practice Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Program Administrator: [usually the dentist] \_\_\_\_\_

Date Plan Implemented/Updated: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. Overview

Potential exposure to airborne pathogens such as SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, and tuberculosis, is the reason why dental personnel must wear respiratory protection during the performance of aerosol-generating procedures.

Dental procedures that use dental instruments, such as handpieces, ultrasonic scalers and air-water syringes, create a spray that potentially can contain contaminated droplets. This spray can also contain aerosols.

Mitigation strategies: [If dental practice treats symptomatic and COVID-19 positive patients, the following paragraph should be revised.] This dental practice screens patients for symptoms of aerosol transmissible diseases and has a policy that symptomatic patients are not to be treated unless they have been cleared by a physician or until 10 or more days have passed since symptoms started or they had a positive COVID-19 test. Symptomatic patients who are in pain, have an infection or require emergency care that cannot be managed with medication will be referred to a facility with an airborne-infection isolation room.

During aerosol-generating procedures, this dental practice implements engineering controls, such as high-volume evacuation and dental dams, to reduce the aerosols in the immediate and general environment.

Covered employees: Use of respirators at this dental practice is to protect against transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and other airborne diseases during aerosol-producing dental treatment. The categories of employees who are included in this program are:

- Dentists.
- Dental hygienists.
- Dental assistants who regularly assist chairside during aerosol-producing procedures.

An employee who does not participate in aerosol-producing procedures but chooses to wear respiratory protection may do so only if the program administrator determines respirator use will not create a hazard. The employee will be provided with information contained in Title 8 CCR Section 5144 Appendix D, found at the end of this document.

Dental procedures requiring respirator use: Any procedure performed with ultrasonic instruments; any procedure performed with a high-speed handpiece; any procedure performed with an air-water syringe; [describe additional procedures here, if any].

---

---

---

## II. Respirator selection

Air-purifying respirators work by removing gas, vapor, particulate or combinations of gas, vapor and/or particulate from the air through the use of filters, cartridges or canisters. Covered employees will select from:

- A. Filtering facepiece respirator (FFPR) such as an N95 respirator. If there is adequate supply, use of NIOSH-certified FFPRs are prioritized. An FFPR with an exhalation valve may not be used unless it is all that is available to the employee and then the valve must be covered with a facemask. An employee who has facial hair or any condition that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal or valve function must not use tight-fitting respirators.
- B. Half- or full-face elastomeric respirator that is able to be fully disinfected. Exhalation valves must have filters.
- C. A powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR), which has a hood, a helmet, a tight-fitting facepiece or a loose-fitting facepiece, will be made available to a covered employee if recommended by a licensed medical care provider. PAPRs have battery-powered blowers to supply purified air.

## III. Medical evaluations

Each covered employee must undergo a medical evaluation prior to respirator fit testing. The confidential evaluation is conducted by a licensed medical care professional identified by this dental practice and utilizes a questionnaire specified in Appendix C (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144c.html>) of the respiratory protection regulation.

- A. The confidential medical evaluation must be conducted during normal working hours or at a time and place convenient to the employee.
- B. The employer or supervisor may not view an employee's responses to the questionnaire. The employee must be provided with an opportunity to discuss the questionnaire and examination results with a licensed medical care professional.
- C. If an employee gives a positive response to any question among questions 1 through 8 in Section 2, Part A of Appendix C, this dental practice must provide a follow-up medical examination. The follow-up examination shall include any medical tests, consultations or diagnostic procedures that the licensed medical care professional deems necessary to make a final determination.
- D. This dental practice shall provide this information to the licensed medical care provider before the provider makes their recommendation:
  - i. A copy of this document and of the respiratory protection regulation. (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144.html>).
  - ii. The type and weight of the respirator to be used by the employee.
  - iii. The duration and frequency of respirator use.
  - iv. The expected physical work effort.
  - v. Additional protective clothing and equipment to be worn.
  - vi. Temperature and humidity extremes that may be encountered.
- E. The licensed medical care provider transmits a written recommendation to this dental practice regarding an employee's ability to use the respirator. The recommendation shall only provide the following information:
  - i. Any limitations on respirator use related to the employee's medical condition or related to the workplace conditions.
  - ii. The need for follow-up medical evaluations, if any.
  - iii. A statement that the employee was provided with a copy of the licensed medical care provider's recommendation.

- F. If the respirator the employee is to use is a negative-pressure respirator and the licensed medical care provider finds a medical condition that may place the employee's health at increased risk if the respirator is used, this dental practice must provide a PAPR if the medical evaluation finds that the employee can use one. If a subsequent medical evaluation finds that the employee is medically able to use a negative-pressure respirator, then this dental practice is no longer required to provide a PAPR.

Additional medical evaluations are required, at a minimum, when:

- A. An employee reports medical signs or symptoms related to their ability to use a respirator.
- B. The licensed medical care provider, program administrator or supervisor recommends reevaluation.
- C. Information from the respiratory protection program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need.
- D. Change occurs in workplace conditions that may substantially increase the physiological burden on an employee.

#### **IV. Fit testing**

This dental practice ensures a covered employee undergoes either a quantitative or qualitative fit test in accordance with Cal/OSHA regulations. The test follows the protocols described in the respiratory protection regulation Appendix A (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144a.html>). The following steps must precede the fit test:

- A. The employee selects an acceptable respirator that will fit them.
- B. The employee is shown how to put on the respirator and ensures it is an acceptable and comfortable fit.
- C. The employee performs seal checks.
- D. The employee performs a series of exercises while wearing the respirator.  
The exercises are described in Appendix A.

When quantitative fit testing is performed, this dental practice does not permit a covered employee to wear a filtering facepiece respirator or other half-facepiece respirator, unless a minimum fit factor of 100 is obtained. When fit testing single-use respirators, a new respirator shall be used for each employee.

This dental practice ensures that each employee who is assigned to use a filtering facepiece or other tight-fitting respirator passes a fit test:

- A. At the time of initial fitting.
- B. When a different size, make, model or style of respirator is used.
- C. At least annually thereafter.

#### **V. Use of respirators**

In order to ensure that a respirator is used properly by an employee, this dental practice will provide instruction on the following situations that can compromise the effective use of respirators:

- A. The person wearing the respirator fails to properly perform seal checks.
- B. The person wearing the respirator is also using personal protective equipment or other equipment that interferes with the face-to-facepiece seal.

- C. The respirator is not properly repaired, and its defective parts are not replaced.
- D. Modifications are made to the respirator or nonapproved replacement parts are used. In these circumstances, employees may have a false sense of security in feeling that they are protected when they are not.
- E. Placing a face or surgical mask over an FFPR to extend its use may potentially damage it. Use a face shield to extend respirator use. A mask may only be placed over a respirator exhalation valve for source control.

Each time they put on a tight-fitting respirator, employees must perform a positive-pressure and/or a negative-pressure seal check by using the procedures provided in Title 8 CCR Section 5144 Appendix B-1 (<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144b.html>), User Seal Check Procedures (Mandatory) or equally effective manufacturer's procedures.

## VI. Maintenance and care of reusable respirators

*Describe how respirators are stored in the practice. If using reusable respirators, describe disinfection procedures. Disinfection procedures must comply with Cal/OSHA requirements ([https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144b\\_2.html](https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144b_2.html)). Consult manufacturer's instructions. Should there be a shortage of respirators, describe steps taken for extended use.*

---

---

---

---

---

## VIII. Training and information

This dental practice provides covered employees with training in the following areas:

- A. Why the respirator is necessary and how improper fit, use or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator.
- B. The capabilities and limitations of the respirator.
- C. Use of the respirator in emergency situations.
- D. How to inspect, put on, remove and use the respirator and how to check the seals.
- E. Recognition of the medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent an employee's effective use of a respirator.
- F. General requirements of the respirator regulation.

Each covered employee is trained before they can use a respirator and annually thereafter. Initial training may not be necessary if another employer has provided acceptable training within the past 12 months. In addition, retraining is required when workplace conditions change, when new types of respirators are used or when inadequacies in the employee's knowledge or use of respirators indicate a need for more training.

## IX. Program evaluation

This dental practice reviews the program annually and solicits input from covered employees regularly.

## Guide to Respiratory Protection at Work

### Title 8 CCR Section 5144 Appendix D

Provide the information on this page to employees who choose to wear respiratory protection when not involved in the performance of aerosol-generating procedures.

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designated to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

**Respiratory Protection Program  
Individual Training Documentation**

\_\_\_\_\_ [Practice Name]

Name of Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_

Training Subject: Respiratory Protection Plan

Training Materials Used: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Hire/Assignment: \_\_\_\_\_

I \_\_\_\_\_ hereby certify that I received training as described above. I understand this training and agree to comply with the safety procedures for my work area.

Employee Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_