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Respiratory Protection Program and Policy

Policy:

Community Living-Central Huron values the health and safety of its employees and volunteers and to that end, has established workplace safety policies and procedures. There may be occasions where respiratory hazards can't be avoided by employees and volunteers, hence, the need for a Respiratory Protection Program. The intent of this Program is to increase the awareness of respiratory hazards in the workplace, provide appropriate training and protection, and to give employees and volunteers the means to protect themselves and others from respiratory hazards. Non-compliance with the Respiratory Protection Program and Policy is subject to discipline, up to and including dismissal from employment/volunteerism with Community Living-Central Huron.

Definitions:

Fit test: The use of qualitative or quantitative method to evaluate the fit of a specific make, model and size of a respirator on an individual.

Fit Testing: is a mandatory test that is conducted to ensure the seal between the respirator mask and the person's face is a tight seal to provide protection from air borne contaminants.

Hazard Assessment: a process used to identify, assess and control workplace hazards and the risks to workers' health and safety; examples of hazards include: biological, chemical and ergonomic.

Health Questionnaire: prior to fit testing and use of a respirator, all employees and volunteers are required to complete a Health Questionnaire; the purpose is to identify any medical conditions that may make the use of a respirator a hazard to the employee.

Quantitative Fit Test: A test method that uses an instrument to assess the amount of leakage into the respirator in order to assess the adequacy of respirator fit.

Qualitative Fit Test: A pass/fail test method that relies on the sensory response of the individual being fit tested, to detect a challenge agent (ie. taste, smell or irritation) in order to assess the adequacy of respirator fit.

Respirator: An apparatus worn over the mouth and nose or the entire face to prevent the inhalation of dust, smoke, airborne particles, or other noxious substances. In Healthcare, it protects the wearer from exposure to biological aerosols, including viruses and bacteria. Respirators are designed to seal tight to the face.

Respiratory Hazards: Can include airborne contaminants such as biological contaminants, dusts, mists, fumes, and gases, or oxygen deficient atmospheres. More than one respiratory hazard can be present at the same time. Viruses or bacteria can be found in respiratory secretions of infected individuals, aerosolized during coughing, sneezing or through medical procedures, such as CPAP.

In addition to the inhalation of infectious agents, such as viruses or bacteria, infectious diseases can also be acquired via ocular exposure (through the mucous membrane of the eye). Respiratory hazards may cause cancer, lung impairment, disease or death.

Procedures:

All Community Living-Central Huron employees are fit tested and trained at the time of initial hiring and every two years thereafter by a qualified Fit Tester. Employees must pass both the Health Questionnaire and the fit test prior to being trained on the use of the respirator. When being fit tested employees are not permitted to have facial hair or jewellery in the seal area of the respirator. A fit test must be conducted each time an employee requires a different type of respirator or a different size (e.g., significant weight gain or loss; dental changes; facial scarring; cosmetic surgery).

For employees who are unable to use a respirator at a work location that requires such, every effort will be made to provide a work accommodation. Employees may be required to provide updated medical information for continued accommodation. The Agency maintains a confidential record of each employee's fit testing requirements.

Hazard Assessment:

In order to determine the presence of a respiratory hazard and to assist in the selection of an appropriate respirator, a hazard assessment of the work area is conducted by the Supervisor in consultation with the Location Health and Safety Representative and if necessary the services of a Qualified Air Tester (Ministry of Environment). Hazard assessments are conducted as required; the hazard assessment of a respiratory hazard includes but is not limited to:

Identify the presence of a contaminant and its state (gas, vapour, aerosol, etc);

- Determination of the likelihood of inhalation of the contaminant;
- Identify how the hazard was introduced;
- Measurement or estimation of the concentration of the contaminant;
- Determination of whether the atmosphere is immediately dangerous to life and health, including oxygen deficiency;
- Determination of applicable health regulations and/or specific standards for the contaminant;
- Determination of characteristics associated with said contaminant;
- Documentation of steps taken, recommendations of action to occur and that such action did occur;
- Written communication is provided to employees and volunteers as to test results, including all recommendations; ongoing follow-up maybe required.

Selection of Appropriate Respiratory Protection:

The Agency offers respiratory protection in the form of respiratory masks and eye and face protection. For the use of respiratory masks, fit testing must occur prior to usage. Respiratory protection shall be selected based on the following criteria:

Review of the hazard assessment;
Health of the worker and ability to wear a respirator;
Existing legislation and standards;
Work requirements and conditions;
Duration of exposure;
Characteristics and limitations of respirators;
Respirator assigned protection factors

Only NIOSH- approved or equivalent respirators shall be selected and used. Staff and Volunteers shall be issued by the Agency, only those respirators for which they have been fit-tested and successfully passed such testing. Other PPE (e.g., goggles, safety glasses, full face shields), as determined necessary, shall be sufficiently supplied by the Employer.

Respirator and Eye Protection Training:

Staff and Volunteers must be trained before they can use a respirator or be assigned to work in a location/area where there has been an identified respiratory hazard. Training shall include: Review of relevant Agency Policies and Procedures (e.g. Pandemic Policy, Infection Control Policy and Procedures), to include the Respiratory Protection Program;

Fit-testing, to include: Questionnaire of suitability; why the respirator is necessary; rationale for the respirator selected; how to place and remove the respirator from the face; proper use of the respirator; the limitations of the respirator; how to conduct a seal check; how to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators; Inspection and maintenance of the respirator; Respirator cleaning and disinfecting; Options of eye protection; Use of eye protection; Eye protection cleaning and disinfecting; Storage of respirators and eye protection.

Cleaning and Maintenance of Respiratory Protective Equipment:

Staff issued with a fit tested respirator and eye protection are responsible for the maintenance of said equipment to ensure their original effectiveness. The maintenance shall include:

- Cleaning and sanitizing: using warm, soapy water and/or sanitized according to the equipment's manufacturer's instructions. *Respirators designed for single use (e.g. N95), shall be disposed of after use in a designated disposal container;
- Inspection, testing and repair: Employees shall inspect their respirators and eye protection before and after each use and report defective or non-functioning equipment to their Supervisor or designate. Defective or non-functioning respirators shall be replaced or removed from service until repaired;
- Proper storage: Employees will store their respiratory equipment in a clean and sanitary location, out of direct sunlight and in boxes or in plastic bags, marked with their name and in a manner that will prevent deformation of equipment parts.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The Employer will:

- Be fully aware of the purpose, roles and responsibilities of the Program.
- Review the Program annually to ensure the Program achieves its health and safety objectives.
- Ensure policies and procedures are in place to address the health, safety and welfare of Staff and Volunteers as it relates to respiratory protection.
- Provide for education and training as necessary.
- Determine who will act as a Fit Tester.
- Ensure a Fit Tester is provided with training from a qualified trainer.
- Ensure there are sufficient number of trained Fit Testers.
- Provide adequate supplies of respiratory protection to work locations, as required

The Supervisor will:

- Be fully aware of the Program requirements
- Coordinate, monitor and make recommendations to modify the Program to the Employer, as needed.
- Conduct hazard assessments, as required
- Refer to resources, qualified health professionals, such as Huron Perth Public Health, Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers, Workers Health & Safety Centre, Public Sector Health and Safety Association when conducting hazard assessments, determining appropriate respiratory protection.
- Investigate respiratory protection options and obtain such protection.
- Complete and maintain an inventory of respiratory protection at designated work locations and replace accordingly
- Communicate with Staff and Volunteers the need for respiratory protection.
- Arrange for the provision of education and training on respiratory protection, as appropriate for Staff and Volunteers.
- Provide Fit Tester training, if deemed as a Fit Tester and successfully passed Fit Tester training.
- Monitor the use, care and storage of respiratory protection equipment.
- Monitor and enforce compliance to the Program.

The Staff/Volunteers will:

- Be fully aware of the Program requirements.
- Report any respiratory hazards immediately to the Supervisor, designate or Pager utilizing the designated form, if possible.
- Participate in any education/training deemed necessary for respiratory protection.
- Wear respiratory protection at designated times at work location, as communicated by the Supervisor. *Work accommodation will be assessed for Staff unable to use respiratory protection.
- Abide by the use, care and storage requirements of respiratory protection equipment.
- Report inventory shortages of respiratory protection equipment to the immediate Supervisor or designate, in writing.
- Notify the Supervisor, in writing, of any condition or change that may impact the ability to wear respiratory equipment, as per the requirements for such.

Location Health and Safety Representatives (LHSR), Employer and Worker will:

- Be fully aware of the Program requirements
- Participate in the annual review of the Program.
- Provide the Employer with Program recommendations.

Evaluation of the Respiratory Protection Program:

The program will be reviewed on an annual basis by Senior Management and the Health & Safety Committee, with consideration to the following:

- Review of roles and responsibilities;
- Adherence to the Program;
- Selection of respiratory protection;
- Review of Health Questionnaire;
- Review of training;
- Cleaning, maintenance and storage;
- Record keeping;

Roles and Responsibilities:

As the IRS states, all matters relating to health and safety, responsibilities are shared among all workplace parties, specifically:

Employer:

The Employer will:

abide by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation; take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of an Employee and Volunteer;

- provide and maintain equipment, materials and protective devices as prescribed;
- maintain an up-to-date registry of identified workplace hazards/risks;
- maintain a Workplace Violence Program Policy/Program and Workplace Harassment Policy/Program;
- assess the risks of workplace violence that may arise from the nature of the workplace, the type of work or conditions of work and record in the Hazard/Risk Registry to the Location Health & Safety Representative, location specific;
- advise all Employees and Volunteers of the results of the Risks of Workplace Violence Assessment, and provide a copy of such, if the assessment is in writing;
- reassess the risks of workplace violence as often as is necessary;
- include measures and procedures for Employees and Volunteers to report incidents of workplace harassment to their immediate Supervisor;
- establish a procedure as to how the Employer will investigate and manage incidents and complaints of workplace harassment and violence;
- determine the necessity to complete individualized Responsive Behaviour Risk Assessments;
- ensure all hazardous materials present in the workplace are identified in the prescribed manner and are available in English and such other languages as required;
- obtain or prepare, as may be prescribed, any expired Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous materials present in the workplace and ensure Material Safety Data Sheets are available in English and such other languages as required; ensure a hazardous material is not used, handled or stored at a workplace unless the prescribed requirements concerning identification, Material Safety Data Sheets and employee instruction and training are met; review at least once a year the Agency's Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedures for the health and safety of Employees and Volunteers and revise based on current legislation and practice;
- review and revise measures and procedures more frequently than annual, if the Employer and Location Health and Safety Representatives determine necessary;
- consult with Location Health and Safety Representatives, develop, establish and provide training and educational programs in health and safety measures and procedures for Employees that are relevant to the Employees' work;
- post in the workplace a copy of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and any explanatory material prepared by the Ministry, outlining the rights, responsibilities and duties of Employees; Bullying, Harassment and Workplace Violence Policy and Procedures.

Supervisor:

The Supervisor will:

- advise Employees and Volunteers of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health and safety of Employees and Volunteers of which the Supervisor is aware;
- provide Employees and Volunteers, when so prescribed, written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the Employee and Volunteer;
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the Employee and Volunteer;
- conduct annual Workplace Hazard/Risk Assessments using the Agency's designated form;
- complete monthly workplace inspections;
- complete individualized Responsive Behaviour Risk Assessments when deemed necessary by the Employer;
- record workplace violence data on designated forms monthly;
- ensure Employees and Volunteers work in a safe manner and with the protective devices, measures and procedures required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation and the Agency's Health & Safety Policies and Procedures;
- instruct and train Employees and Volunteers on how to wear or use any protective clothing, equipment or device prior to such use and at regular intervals thereafter;
- educate Employees and Volunteers on the hazards and risks and provide written measures and procedures, as required;
- investigate all reports of health and safety hazards/risks and incidents;
- respond in writing to any written or verbal reports and provide written recommendations of hazards/risks/incidents.

Location Health and Safety Representatives:

The Location Health and Safety Representatives will:

- ▶ participate in all training and educational programs, as determined by the Employer to be beneficial for the area of hazards and risks;
- ▶ encourage co-workers to work safely and to report any hazardous or unsafe conditions immediately to their Supervisor or designate using Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Report;
- ▶ obtain from the Employer information concerning the conducting or taking of tests of any equipment, machine, device, article, thing, material or biological, chemical or physical agent in or about a workplace for the purpose of occupational health and safety;
- ▶ be consulted about and be present at the beginning of testing conducted in or about the workplace if the Location Health and Safety Representative believes his or her presence is required to ensure that valid testing procedures are used or to ensure that the test results are valid; obtain information from the Employer respecting the identification of potential or existing hazards of materials, processes or equipment, and health and safety experience and work practice(s) and standards in similar or other industries of which the Employer has knowledge;
- ▶ conduct and document monthly inspections of their work location and submit such to their immediate Supervisor within the designated time frame;

- ▶ identify and report situations immediately, that may be a source of danger or hazard to Employees and Volunteers and make recommendations to their Supervisor by completing a Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report;
- ▶ review location Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Reports and make written recommendations;
- ▶ review Incident Accident Reports and make written recommendations and submit
- ▶ accompany a Ministry of Labour Inspector during an inspection visit;
- ▶ investigate work refusals;
- ▶ investigate, when notified by the Employer of a critical injury/fatality and provide a report in writing to the Ministry of Labour, within forty-eight (48) hours as prescribed.

Employees:

The Employees will:

- report to their Supervisor or designate, immediately, the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the Worker is aware and which may endanger himself, herself or another Employee or Volunteer using a Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Report;
- report to their Supervisor or designate, immediately, anything that may be a hazard or risk using a Workplace Hazard and Suggestion Report;
- report to their Supervisor any contravention of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or Health Care and Residential Facilities Regulation or the existence of any hazard of which the Employee or Volunteer is aware;
- abide by safe work practices/safe operating procedures, to include but not limited to Slips, Trips & Falls; “Client Handling;” Responsive Behaviours; Workplace Violence and Harassment; Infection Prevention and Control and MSD.
- take part, when requested, in a workplace inspection to advise of any hazards or risks;
- participate in all training and educational programs, as determined by the Employer to be beneficial for the area of hazards and risks.

Note: At any time should an Employee or Volunteer believe they are in imminent risk or danger, contact 911 immediately.

Reporting and Investigation:

It is the responsibility of all Employees and Volunteers to immediately report all potential risk factors for hazards/incidents to their immediate Supervisor or designate using the Employee Incident Form and/or the Workplace Hazard & Suggestion Report. The Supervisor will investigate risks/hazards/incidents as soon as possible and take appropriate steps to address any continuing risk to the health, safety and well being of all Employees and Volunteers. Should a hazard result in a critical injury or fatality, Supervisors, Employees and Location Health and Safety Representatives will follow the Agency’s Critical Injury Policy (#D-006) .

Evaluation:

Community Living-Central Huron is committed to looking at leading indicators of workplace risks and hazards through such methods as information gathering (Workplace Inspections, Incident Investigations, Job Hazard Analysis, etc), surveys, data collection (Rate Group Trends), and Staff meetings.

Supervisors will regularly audit Employee and Volunteer practices related to hazards and risks, through such means as, monthly, periodic inspections at the work locations; documenting written reports of workplace violence on the designated form; providing written recommendations in response to any reports of hazards/risks; reviewing monthly work location checklists completed by Location Health and Safety Representatives; and, completing annual workplace hazard/risk assessments. The Location Health and Safety Representatives will provide written recommendations to the Employer when identifying issues related to Employee hazards/risks. The Agency will maintain a Hazard/Risk Registry, which will be updated annually in consultation with the Location Health & Safety Representatives, as necessary, based on the written information/documentation received by Supervisors, Employees, Volunteers and the Location Health and Safety Representatives.

Related Policies and Procedures:

- Behavioural Support Policy C-002
- Health and Safety Policy Statement D-001
- Emergency Policy D-003
- Smoking D-004
- Critical Injury D-006
- Bullying, Harassment and Workplace Violence Policy and Procedures D-007
- Pandemic Policy D-008
- Preventative Maintenance Policy D-009
- Musculoskeletal Disorders Awareness Policy D-010
- First Aid Policy and Procedures D-011
- Working Alone Policy D-012
- Infection Control Policy and Procedures D-013
- Sexual Harassment Policy E-013
- Early and Safe Return to Work E-016

Other Related Agency Documents:

- Community Living-Central Huron Medication Policy and Procedures Manual
- Community Living-Central Huron Occupational Health and Safety Document