

Respiratory Protection

Cal/OSHA's regulation for worker use of respirators is in Title 8, California Code of Regulations (T8CCR) Section [5144](#), and its appendices. The standard and appendices detail steps employers must take to assure safe and effective use of respirators in the workplace. T8CCR [5144](#) applies to all workplace respirator use. Many substance-specific standards (e.g., lead, asbestos, carcinogens) also have additional respiratory protection requirements. (Firefighters: see also [3409](#).)



Airborne contaminants must be controlled by engineering and administrative controls. Respirators must also be used as follows: [5144\(c\)](#)

- During the time period necessary to install or implement feasible engineering controls.
- Where feasible engineering and administrative controls fail to achieve full compliance.
- In emergencies.

The Cal/OSHA respirator regulation and guide to respiratory protection are available at the following websites:

T8CCR 5144:

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5144.html>

Respiratory Protection in the Workplace:

http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/respiratory.pdf

Mandatory Elements of the Comprehensive Respirator Program Include:



Written procedures that address the following topics:

- Selection of appropriate respirators
- Medical evaluation of respirator users
- Annual face seal fit testing
- Procedures for routine and emergency use
- Procedures for respirator cleaning, disinfection, storage, inspection, maintenance and repair
- Air quality for supplied air devices (if applicable)
- Annual employee training
- Periodic program evaluation

Selected Requirements in the Cal/OSHA Regulation:

- Qualified program administrator: required to administer/oversee and evaluate the respiratory protection program. [5144\(c\)\(3\)](#)
- Atmospheres immediately dangerous to life or health: detailed specification of acceptable respirators.... [5144\(d\)\(2\)](#)
- End-of-service-life indicators: required for air-purifying respirators, or the employer must have data showing acceptable change-out times [5144\(d\)\(3\)\(C\)2](#)
- Employee medical evaluations: required prior to first use of a respirator, as well as follow-up medical examinations and allowing employees to discuss their medical questionnaire results with the administering health care provider [5144\(e\)](#)
- Powered air-purifying respirators: to be provided to employees unable to wear a negative pressure respirator for medical reasons [5144\(e\)\(6\)\(B\)](#)
- Annual face seal fit testing with test atmosphere: acceptable methods of fit testing are detailed in [Appendix A](#). Fit testing is required for tight-fitting air-supplied respirators..... [5144\(f\)](#)
- Facepiece seal checks: each time tight-fitting respirators are put on, users must perform a seal check as specified in [Appendix B1](#) [5144\(g\)\(1\)\(C\)](#)
- Atmospheres that may be immediately dangerous to life or health: detailed precautions to be taken [5144\(g\)\(3\)](#)
- Annual employee training: employees must be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills specific to the hazards in their particular workplace, including emergency use of respirators [5144\(k\)](#)
- Ongoing respirator program evaluation: including periodic consultation with employees [5144\(l\)](#)
- Voluntary use of respirator where it is not required: provisions where employees use respirators and dust masks as a voluntary precaution... [5144\(c\)\(2\)](#)

Additional Respiratory Protection Resources

Further assistance on general respiratory protection in the workplace and respiratory protection resources specifically for health care providers, emergency responders, construction workers, firefighters, etc., may be obtained from the organizations listed below.

California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Occupational Health Branch

General Resources

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb/Pages/RespLinks.aspx>

This webpage contains a collection of links useful to both employers and workers. These links provide general information on respiratory protection such as how respirators protect the user, respirator types and selection, training courses and educational materials on respirators, respiratory protection program evaluation checklist, how to identify NIOSH-approved respirators and where to get them from, etc. The information is presented in various formats including fact sheets, e-tools and training videos.

Cal/OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb/Pages/RespStd.aspx>

This webpage provides links to the Cal/OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard and its appendices (T8 CCR Section [5144](#)) on the Cal/OSHA website. The Respiratory Protection Standard covers the uses of respiratory protection in the workplace, the requirements of a written program including the designation of a program administrator, procedures for hazard evaluation and respirator selection, medical evaluations, training, fit testing and recordkeeping.

Resources for Health Care

www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb/Pages/HCRRespLinks.aspx

This webpage contains a respirator program toolkit designed specifically to assist hospitals and other health care settings in reducing exposure to infectious diseases and in further improving the effectiveness of their respiratory protection programs.

The toolkit consists of a guide and resources. The guide covers key requirements of the Cal/OSHA Respiratory Protection and Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standard, guidance on developing and evaluating a respiratory protection program, and information on the selection and use of respirators.

The toolkit also includes practical resources such as a guide for respirator program administrators, a respiratory protection program evaluation checklist and instructions for use, a respirator selection guide for aerosol transmissible diseases, and other valuable materials.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

One of the objectives of the CDC is to help all workers to have the basic skills they need to stay safe on the job and to contribute to a safe, healthy, and productive workplace. The following links provide a range of general and specific respiratory protection information applicable to a multitude of industries.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Respirator Users

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respusers.html>

Workplace Safety & Health Topics – Respirators

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/respirators/>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

For training videos and other related educational materials valuable to employers and employees, regardless of the type and extent of exposure, access the following links:

Occupational Safety & Health Administration Respiratory Protection

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/respiratoryprotection/index.html>

OSHA Respiratory Protection eTool

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/>

Getting Help

Improper use of respirators can result in worker injury and illness and can also result in a Cal/OSHA enforcement visit. For help in complying with Section [5144](#), contact Cal/OSHA Consultation Service.

Employers can request at no cost that an industrial hygienist to come to their worksite to determine if respirators are needed and which ones to use.

Cal/OSHA Consultation Services Branch

Publications: www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/PubOrder.asp

Consultation Programs: www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/consultation.html

Toll-free Number: **1-800-963-9424**

Onsite Assistance Program Area Offices:

Central Valley: 559-454-1295; San Diego/Imperial: 619-767-2060
No. California: 916 263-0704; San Bernardino: 909-383-4567
SF/Bay Area: 510-622-2891; San Fernando Valley: 818-901-5754
La Palma/LA/Orange: 714-562-5525

The information is neither a substitute for nor legal interpretation of the occupational safety and health regulations. Readers need to refer directly to Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations for detailed information regarding the regulation's scope, specifications, exceptions and other requirements that may be applicable to their operations.