**Personal Protective Equipment**

**705.1   PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

﻿﻿﻿﻿This policy identifies the different types of personal protective equipment (PPE) provided to employees﻿ as well as the requirements and guidelines for the use of PPE.

This policy does not address protection from communicable diseases.

705.1.1   DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Personal protective equipment (PPE)** - Equipment that protects a person from serious workplace injuries or illnesses resulting from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards.

**Respiratory PPE** - Any device that is worn by the user to protect from exposure to atmospheres where there is smoke, where there are low levels of oxygen or high levels of carbon monoxide, or where toxic gases or other respiratory hazards are present. For purposes of this policy, respiratory PPE does not include particulate-filtering masks such as N95 or N100 masks.

**705.2   POLICY**

The ﻿agency﻿ endeavors to protect employees by supplying certain PPE as provided in this policy.

**705.3   SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Supervisors are responsible for identifying and making available PPE appropriate for the work environment.

**705.4   EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees are required to use PPE as provided in this policy and pursuant to their training.

Employees are responsible for proper maintenance and storage of issued PPE. PPE should be stored in an appropriate location so that it is available when needed.

Any employee who identifies hazards in the workplace is encouraged to utilize appropriate procedures to recommend new or improved PPE or additional needs for PPE.

**705.5   EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT AND USE**

PPE shall meet or exceed any applicable requirements. Federal or other nationally recognized standards should be used as a guide for the procurement, use, maintenance, and storage of the following safety-related equipment in the absence of other mandatory requirements:

1. Hearing protection (29 CFR 1910.95)
2. Eye protection (29 CFR 1910.133)
3. Respiratory protection (29 CFR 1910.134)
4. Head protection (29 CFR 1910.135)
5. Foot protection (29 CFR 1910.136)
6. Electrical protective equipment (29 CFR 1910.137)
7. Hand protection (29 CFR 1910.138)
8. Personal fall protection systems (29 CFR 1910.140)

**705.6   HEARING PROTECTION**

Approved hearing protection shall be used by employees during firearms training.

**705.7   EYE PROTECTION**

Approved eye protection, including side protection, shall be used by employees during firearms training. Eye protection for employees who wear prescription lenses shall incorporate the prescription (e.g., eye protection that can be worn over prescription lenses). Employees shall ensure their eye protection does not interfere with the fit of their hearing protection.

**705.8   HEAD AND BODY PROTECTION**

Employees who make arrests or control crowds should be provided ballistic head protection with an attachable face shield.

Padded body protection consisting of chest, arm, leg, and groin protection should be provided as required by any employment agreements.

**705.9   RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

﻿﻿An employee should be designated who is responsible for ensuring a respiratory protection plan is developed and maintained. The plan should include procedures for (29 CFR 1910.134):

1. Selecting appropriate respiratory PPE based on hazards and risks associated with functions or positions.
2. Fit testing, including identification of employees or contractors qualified to conduct fit testing.
3. Medical evaluations.
4. PPE inventory control.
5. PPE issuance and replacement.
6. Cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, repairing, discarding, and otherwise maintaining respiratory PPE, including schedules for these activities.
7. Regularly reviewing the PPE plan.
8. Remaining current with applicable National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), ANSI, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and state PPE standards and guidelines.

705.9.1   RESPIRATORY PROTECTION USE

Designated employees may be issued respiratory PPE based on the employee’s assignment (e.g., a narcotics investigator who is involved in clandestine lab investigations).

Respiratory PPE may be worn when authorized by a scene commander who will determine the type and level of protection appropriate at a scene based upon an evaluation of the hazards present.

Scene commanders are responsible for monitoring employees using respiratory PPE and their degree of exposure or stress. When there is a change in work area conditions or when an employee’s degree of exposure or stress may affect respirator effectiveness, the scene commander should reevaluate the continued effectiveness of the respirator and direct the employee to leave the respirator use area when the scene commander reasonably believes (29 CFR 1910.134):

1. It is necessary for the employee to wash the employee’s face and the respirator facepiece to prevent eye or skin irritation associated with respirator use.
2. The employee detects vapor or gas breakthrough, or there is a change in breathing resistance or leakage of the facepiece.
3. The employee needs to replace the respirator, filter, cartridge, or canister.

705.9.2   EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Employees shall not use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), full-face respirators, or cartridge respirators unless they have completed training requirements for the equipment.

Employees exposed to environments that are reasonably known to be harmful due to gases, smoke, or vapors shall use respiratory PPE.

Employees using respiratory PPE shall (29 CFR 1910.134):

1. Ensure that they have no facial hair between the sealing surface of the facepiece and the face that could interfere with the seal or the valve function. Employees also shall ensure that they have no other condition that will interfere with the face-to-facepiece seal or the valve function.
2. Not wear corrective glasses, goggles, or other PPE that interferes with the seal of the facepiece to the face, or that has not been previously tested for use with that respiratory equipment.
3. Perform a user seal check per agency-approved procedures recommended by the respirator manufacturer each time they put on a tight-fitting respirator.
4. Leave a respirator use area whenever they detect vapor or gas breakthrough, changes in breathing resistance, or leakage of their facepiece and ensure that the respirator is replaced or repaired before returning to the affected area.

705.9.3   GAS MASK

Full-face air-purifying respirators, commonly referred to as gas masks, may be fitted with mechanical pre-filters or combination cartridge/filter assemblies for use in areas where gases, vapors, dust, fumes, or mists are present. Employees must identify and use the correct cartridge based on the circumstances (29 CFR 1910.134).

A scene commander may order the use of gas masks in situations where the use of an SCBA is not necessary. These incidents may include areas where tear gas has or will be used or where a vegetation fire is burning. Gas masks shall not be used if there is a potential for an oxygen-deficient atmosphere.

Employees shall ensure their gas mask filters are replaced whenever:

1. They smell, taste, or are irritated by a contaminant.
2. They experience difficulty breathing due to filter loading.
3. The cartridges or filters become wet.
4. The expiration date on the cartridges or canisters has been reached.

705.9.4   SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS

Scene commanders may direct employees to use SCBA when entering an atmosphere that may pose an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects, or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. These situations may include but are not limited to:

1. Entering the hot zone of a hazardous materials incident.
2. Entering any area where contaminant levels may become unsafe without warning, or any situation where exposures cannot be identified or reasonably estimated.
3. Entering a smoke- or chemical-filled area.

The use of SCBA should not cease until approved by a scene commander.

705.9.5   RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING

No employee should be issued respiratory PPE until a proper fit testing has been completed by a designated employee or contractor (29 CFR 1910.134).

After initial testing, fit testing for respiratory PPE should be repeated (29 CFR 1910.134):

1. At least once every 12 months.
2. Whenever there are changes in the type of SCBA or facepiece used.
3. Whenever there are significant physical changes in the user (e.g., obvious change in body weight, scarring of the face seal area, dental changes, cosmetic surgery, any other condition that may affect the fit of the facepiece seal).

All respirator fit testing shall be conducted in negative-pressure mode.

705.9.6   RESPIRATORY MEDICAL EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

No employee should be issued respiratory protection that forms a complete seal around the face until (29 CFR 1910.134):

1. The employee has completed a medical evaluation that includes a medical evaluation questionnaire.
2. A physician or other licensed health care professional has reviewed the questionnaire.
3. The employee has completed any physical examination recommended by the reviewing physician or health care professional.

**705.10   RECORDS**

﻿﻿The Training Manager or authorized designee﻿ is responsible for maintaining records of all:

1. PPE training.
2. Initial fit testing for respiratory protection equipment.
3. Annual fit testing.
4. Respirator medical evaluation questionnaires and any subsequent physical examination results.
5. These records shall be maintained in a separate confidential medical file.

The records shall be maintained in accordance with the agency﻿ records retention schedule (29 CFR 1910.1020).

**705.11   TRAINING**

﻿﻿Employees should be trained in the respiratory and other hazards to which they may be potentially exposed during routine and emergency situations.

All employees should be trained in the proper use and maintenance of PPE issued to them, including when the use is appropriate; how to put on, remove, and adjust PPE; how to care for the PPE; and the limitations of each device (29 CFR 1910.132).

Employees issued respiratory PPE should attend annual training on the proper use of respiratory protection devices (29 CFR 1910.134)*.*

**IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE**

***The following information is provided to assist you in implementing this policy and should be deleted before the policy is issued to agency personnel.***

**Personal Protective Equipment**

This policy is being provided to contribute to the ongoing discussions and actions regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019).

This policy is intended as a starting point for law enforcement agencies preparing policies for dealing with communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and exposure to the coronavirus. This is a national-level policy and does not include applicable state or local requirements.

Lexipol is not your agency's policy maker. Your agency is responsible for reviewing, customizing, and adopting any version of this policy for your agency. Neither the policy nor any information provided should be considered to contain legal advice or opinions. You should contact your legal counsel to obtain legal advice.

The policy is intended to provide guidelines to ensure agency employees are reasonably protected by providing and maintaining, at no cost to the employee, personal protective equipment (PPE), safety devices, and safeguards for workplace activities. It addresses basic risk-reduction measures associated with cleaning PPE as well as general maintenance and inspections.

This policy references federal OSHA regulations regarding PPE. These are included as best practices even if your agency is not required to comply with the regulations.

Additionally, workplace safety divisions are useful resources that may review your operations at no cost and may not penalize your organization if corrective action is needed or recommended. We suggest that you consult this resource to identify any additional provisions they recommend including in this policy.

**CUSTOMIZATION**

You should customize this policy to meet your agency’s practice, paying particular attention to the following sections:

**HEAD AND BODY PROTECTION**

You should review for consistency with your equipment issue practices.

**RECORDS**

You should identify your agency’s designated employee for this purpose, as well as any state-mandated retention period.