

Voluntary Use of a Respirator Request Form

Employees may voluntarily use a respirator during activities for which Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has determined that employee exposure to airborne contaminants is below the applicable regulatory limits. To request voluntary use of a respirator, submit this form to ehs@northwestern.edu.

Print Name: _____ Net ID: _____ Work Phone Number: _____

Job Title: _____ Department: _____

Supervisor: _____ Location(s) of use: _____

Reason for using a respirator (i.e., describe the nature of work and the type of contaminant): _____

Respirator make/model/manufacture: _____

[OSHA](#) requires any employee voluntarily using a respirator to be provided with the following information:

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 exposure 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:

- A. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning, and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.
- B. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health 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.
- C. Do not wear your respirator in atmospheres containing contaminants that your respirator is not designed 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.
- D. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

Training

Employees who voluntarily use a respirator must complete annual [online training](#) via myHR Learn.

Medical Evaluations

Employees who voluntarily use a respirator (except for disposable filtering facepiece respirators such as N-95s) must complete a medical clearance questionnaire evaluation to determine whether they can safely use a respirator. Please contact EHS at ehs@northwestern.edu to arrange this medical evaluation.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the respirator manufacturer's guidelines and information provided above and have successfully completed the training and medical evaluation.

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

EHS Review

- Approved.** The respirator requested is approved, when fitted properly, for use against the contaminants and under the conditions indicated in this form. Any change in respirator type, conditions, tasks, or areas requires review and approval by EHS. EHS voluntary use approval is valid for 3 years, or until the respirator medical clearance evaluation has expired, as described in the Northwestern [Respiratory Protection](#) program, at which point employees must complete a new Voluntary Use of Respiratory Protection Form and submit it to ehs@northwestern.edu for review and approval.
- Denied.** The respirator requested is not permitted. Contact ehs@northwestern.edu for more information.
Comments: _____

EHS Representative Signature: _____ Date: _____