

Dated: 6/6/2024

POLICY TITLE: Respiratory Protection Equipment

OWNING DIRECTORATE: Corporate and Strategic Services

AUTHOR: Health and Safety Manager

CONTACT DETAILS: 101

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT: Complete

AUTHORISED PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (APP) NATIONAL GUIDANCE: No

AIM OF POLICY: This policy has been developed to provide a structured framework to reduce, so far as reasonably practicable, the respiratory risk from working within hazardous environments.

To manage the use of Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE) in accordance with relevant statutory duties, approved codes of practice and associated guidance.

Some specialist departments and teams will be out of scope for this policy including Crime Scene Managers and Investigators, Detention Officers and Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) teams.

BENEFIT OF POLICY: This policy is designed to ensure Northumbria Police meets its statutory duty to provide Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) where required and maintains the health and safety of staff working in hazardous respiratory environments.

REASON FOR POLICY: To ensure the health and safety of officers and staff entering or working in respiratory environments assessed as hazardous through compliance with legislation, codes of practice and guidance.

This policy applies to any situation where an officer or member of staff is required to work in a respiratory environment which has been assessed as hazardous. Where the requirement to enter and work in that environment cannot be eliminated or reduced to as low as reasonably practicable by any other means, the officer or member of staff must wear Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE) to enter and remain in that hazardous environment.

The RPE must be appropriate to the potential hazards identified within the environment. The default RPE equipment will be a tight-fitting half face respirator with a Filtering Face Piece (FFP) matched to the hazards. This will usually be a FFP3 particulate filter.

A supply of alternative filter types for use in environments requiring additional protection other than a particulate filter will be maintained and can be accessed following consultation with the Force Health and Safety team.

Any officer or staff member wearing a tight-fitting respirator must be face fit tested and clean shaven in the area of the seal between the face and respirator. This is to ensure an effective fit and prove efficacy of the equipment and to comply with relevant safety codes of practice. Further information regarding this can be found in the supporting procedure.

Certain roles will be required to wear a tight-fitting respirator during duty unless there is a reasonable adjustment or reason for exemption which has been discussed with the local Senior Management Team (SMT). These roles will be clean shaven for duty or have the ability to be so at short notice. Any member of staff in these roles with long hair will be required to tie it back if deploying in a respirator to avoid interference with the face seal. These roles include:

- Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT)
- Licensed Search Officer (LSO)
- Dog section
- Police Search Adviser (PoISA)
- Drugs expert
- Disaster Victim Identification (DVI)

Other staff may be fit tested and issued RPE to meet local operational demand on a voluntary basis.

Disposable tight-fitting respirators will continue to be available for officers who are fit tested but not issued with a personal respirator.

Alternative respiratory protection may be available in the event of operational requirement or reasonable adjustment following consultation with the area command SMT or Head of Department and Force Health and Safety team.

SOURCE DOCUMENT: N/A

GROUPS AFFECTED: All staff and officers required to enter and/or work in a respiratory environment assessed as hazardous.

ACCESS AND DISCLOSURE RESTRICTIONS: None
