



# RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**DIRECTOR:**

*Wayne P. Sabat Jr.*

**POLICY  
NUMBER:  
10.19-3 DOC**

**EFFECTIVE  
DATE:  
09/28/2023**

**SUBJECT:  
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

**LAST REVIEWED:  
09/2023**

**SECTION: SAFETY AND  
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

**SUPERSEDES:  
10.19-2 DOC**

**AUTHORITY: Rhode Island General Laws (RIGL) § 42-56-10(22), Powers of the director**

**REFERENCES: Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 29, Parts 1910.133, 1910.134, and 1910.95; American National Standard for Occupational and Education Eye and Face Protection, Z87.1-1989; the most recent versions of RIDOC policies 9.26 DOC, [CONFIDENTIAL Tool Control Plan](#); 10.01 DOC, [Fire Safety Program](#); 21.01 DOC, [Inmate Employment: Selection, Training and Supervision](#); RIDOC's Respiratory Protection Program - Employees; RIDOC's Respiratory Protection Program - Inmate Workers**

**INMATE/PUBLIC ACCESS: YES**

**AVAILABLE IN SPANISH: YES**

**I. PURPOSE:**

To establish guidelines for the availability, use, and maintenance of personal protective equipment used by the Rhode Island Department of Corrections' (RIDOC's) employees and inmate workers.

**II. POLICY:**

Protective equipment, including personal protective equipment for ears, eyes, face, head, and extremities; protective clothing; respiratory devices, protective shields, and barriers are provided, used, and maintained in a sanitary and reliable manner, whenever necessary, by reasons of hazards or processes or environment, chemical hazards, or mechanical irritants encountered in a manner capable of causing injury or impairment in

the function of any part of the body through absorption, inhalation, and/or physical contact.

III. **DEFINITIONS:**

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** - equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. Examples of PPE include disposable gloves, puncture resistant gloves, masks, and impervious gowns.

IV. **PROCEDURES:**

A. **General Information**

1. Correctional Industries Instructors and/or supervisors provide safety orientations to inmate workers. As part of these orientations, inmate workers are instructed as to what personal protective equipment is voluntary and available, as well as what equipment is mandatory.

**NOTE:** For more information specific to respirator training, please see Section [III.C.4](#).

2. Unless otherwise specified, employees and inmate workers who do not use personal protective equipment when they are required to do so are subject to discipline.

B. **Eye and Face Protection**

1. RIDOC employees and inmate workers are required to wear protective eye and face equipment when there is a reasonable probability of preventable injury (e.g., suitable eye protection is worn when machines or operations present hazards such as flying objects, glare, liquids, injurious radiation, or a combination of these hazards). RIDOC makes available several types of protectors suitable for the work to be performed.
2. Eye and face protectors:
  - a. provide adequate protection against the particular hazard(s) for which they are designed;

- b. are reasonably comfortable when worn under the designated conditions;
    - c. fit snugly and shall not unduly interfere with the movement of the wearer;
    - d. are durable;
    - e. are disposable or reusable following disinfection;
    - f. are easily cleaned;
    - g. are kept clean and in good repair.
  3. Persons whose vision requires the use of eyeglasses and who are required by policy to wear eye protection, wear goggles or eyeglasses of one of the following types:
    - a. eyeglasses whose protective lenses provide optical correction;
    - b. goggles that can be worn over corrective eyeglasses without disturbing the adjustment of the eyeglasses;
    - c. goggles that incorporate corrective lenses mounted behind the protective lenses.
  4. When limitations or precautions are indicated by the manufacturer, Correctional Industries Supervisors notify users and ensure that they take care to strictly observe such limitations and precautions.
  5. Design, construction, testing and use of devices for eye and face protection purchased for use by RIDOC employees and inmate workers comply with the American National Standard for Occupational and Education Eye and Face Protection, ANSI Z87.1-1989.
- C. Respiratory Protection
1. RIDOC provides respirators, which are applicable and suitable for the purpose intended, when such equipment is recommended or necessary to protect the health of the employee and/or inmate worker.

2. The Environmental Health Coordinator (EHC) is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of respiratory protection programs, which include the following requirements:

- a. Voluntary

- (1) RIDOC provides disposable dust mist masks to those employees/inmate workers who work in areas where workers may *request* respiratory protection.
- (2) These masks are distributed in accordance with the affected facility's/unit's/program's tool control procedures (i.e., inmate workers are required to sign out masks, exchange dirty/unusable masks for new ones, etc.).

- b. Mandatory

For use in those areas where respiratory protection is *required* as determined by federal regulations.

3. Medical Evaluation

No one is assigned to a task requiring use of a respirator unless a physician or licensed health care professional (P/LHCP) provides a prior written recommendation regarding the said person's ability to use a respirator (RIDOC Health Care Services staff evaluates inmate workers, and a P/LHCP examines employees).

- a. Said P/LHCP (RIDOC or personal) determines what health and/or physical conditions are pertinent.
- b. Qualified medical staff conducts additional medical evaluations if:
  - (1) Employee/inmate workers report medical signs or symptoms that are related to their ability to use a respirator.
  - (2) A P/LHCP, supervisor or the Respiratory Program Protection Administrator informs the employer that an employee needs to be re-evaluated.

- (3) Information from the respiratory protection program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need for the physical/medical evaluation of an employee or inmate worker.
- (4) A change in workplace conditions occurs (e.g., physical work effort, protective clothing, and temperature) that may result in a substantial increase in the physiological burden placed on an employee/inmate worker.
- c. Employees and/or inmate workers are not fit tested without a written recommendation from the P/LHCP documenting the employees' and/or inmate workers' ability to wear a respirator.
- d. Inmate workers who refuse medical exams are dismissed.
- e. An employee who refuses a medical exam must acknowledge (in writing) that he/she is required to wear a respirator but refuses to do so.

4. Classroom Training

Training Academy staff (for RIDOC employees) or the EHC/designee (for inmate workers) provides the initial and the required annual classroom training for respirator wearers. Training topics include:

- a. why respirators are necessary and how improper fit, use or maintenance can compromise the effectiveness of the respirator;
- b. limitations and capabilities of the respirator;
- c. use in emergency situations;
- d. how to inspect, put on, remove, and check the respirator seals;
- e. procedures to maintain and store respirators;
- f. recognition of medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent effective use of respirators; and

- g. the general requirements of the OSHA Respirator Protection Standard.

5. Fit Testing

Training Academy staff (for RIDOC employees) or the EHC/designee (for inmate workers) conducts fit testing for persons performing tasks that require the use of a respirator in accordance with applicable federal regulations. Fit testing includes:

- a. Training using the manufacturer's instructions, demonstrations, and practice in how wear and adjust the respirator.
- b. Qualitative or quantitative fit testing for respirator wearers to determine if the respirator fits properly.
- c. The Training Academy and each facility monitor employee status to ensure compliance with annual classroom training and fit testing requirements.
- d. The Associate Director of Maintenance/designee ensures those Facilities and Maintenance staff who are required to wear respirators to perform their duties receive required physical examinations and are trained and fit tested in accordance with applicable federal regulations.

6. Respirator Use and Maintenance

Employees/inmate workers use RIDOC issued respiratory protection in accordance with instructions and training received from Training Academy staff or the EHC/designee. Respirators are not worn when conditions prevent a good face seal. Such conditions may be the growth of beards, sideburns, skull caps or temple pieces on eyeglasses. Also, the absence of one or both dentures can seriously affect the fit of a face piece.

- a. Personal issue respirators are cleaned as often as the user deems necessary.
- b. Respirators used by more than one person are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- c. The wearer inspects the respirators during cleaning and before each use. Worn or deteriorated parts are replaced.
- d. Respirators are stored in convenient clean and sanitary locations.
- e. Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) may be used *only* by RIDOC staff *and only* in an emergency situation (e.g., a fire/CERT intervention).
- f. Employees who use SCBAs to provide escort to Fire Department personnel entering RIDOC facilities work as a “team” of, at minimum, one (1) RIDOC escort for each Fire Department crew.
- g. RIDOC employees may use SCBAs for “secondary” sweep purposes only when staffing levels are sufficient to allow implementation of the “2-in-2-out” principle as defined in the most recent version of RIDOC policy 10.01 DOC, Fire Safety Program without significantly compromising personal safety or facility security.
- h. In the event an emergency situation arises involving an inmate worker who is using a supplied air respirator (e.g., spray paint booth or grit blasting booth), the job-site Correctional Officer makes the appropriate code response.  
  
**NOTE:** Leave the area **immediately when** the SCBA air pressure alarm sounds or the Personal Alert Safety System (PASS) device activates.
- i. The Fire Safety Technician is responsible for the Grade D air supply compressor that is used to fill air supply bottles for SCBAs. Said compressor receives scheduled service and maintenance bi-annually.
- j. Prison Industries is responsible for the Grade D air supply compressor for use with air line systems utilized by inmate workers. The Correctional Industries supervisor conducts the necessary compressor maintenance checks and documents his/her findings.

7. Procedure for Cleaning Respirators

These procedures are provided for employee/inmate use when cleaning respirators. They are general in nature, and as an alternative the cleaning recommendations provided by the manufacturer may be used, provided such procedures are as effective as those listed here:

- a. Remove filters, cartridges, or canisters. Disassemble facepieces by removing speaking diaphragms, demand and pressure-demand valve assemblies, hoses, or any components recommended by the manufacturer. Discard or repair any defective parts.
- b. Wash components in warm (110 °F maximum) water with a mild detergent or with a cleaner recommended by the manufacturer. A stiff bristle (not wire) brush may be used to facilitate the removal of dirt.
- c. Rinse components thoroughly in clean, warm (110 °F maximum), preferably running water. Drain.
- d. When the cleaner used does not contain a disinfecting agent, respirator components should be immersed for two minutes in one of the following:
  - (1) Hypochlorite solution (50 ppm of chlorine) made by adding approximately one milliliter of laundry bleach to one liter of water at 110 °F; or,
  - (2) Aqueous solution of iodine (50 ppm iodine) made by adding approximately 0.8 milliliters of tincture of iodine (6-8 grams ammonium and/or potassium iodide/100 cc of 45% alcohol) to one liter of water at 43 °C (110 °F); or,
  - (3) Other commercially available cleansers of equivalent disinfectant quality when used as directed, if their use is recommended or approved by the respirator manufacturer.
- e. Rinse components thoroughly in clean, warm (110 °F maximum), preferably running water. Drain. The importance of thorough rinsing cannot be overemphasized. Detergents or disinfectants that dry on facepieces may result in dermatitis. In addition, some



disinfectants may cause deterioration of rubber or corrosion of metal parts if not completely removed.

- f. Components should be hand-dried with a clean lint-free cloth or air-dried.
- g. Reassemble facepiece, replacing filters, cartridges, and canisters where necessary.
- h. Test the respirator to ensure that all components work properly.

8. Changing the Respirator Filter

- a. Protection provided by respirators used to reduce worker exposure to particulate contaminants is determined by a combination of wear time, face seal leakage, and filter efficiency. Wear time can be maximized through training about the need for proper respirator use, coupled with selecting respirators that are comfortable and easy to breathe through. Face seal leakage can be minimized through training on proper fitting methods and application of fit tests. The optimal filter efficiency is selected based on the contaminants found in the workplace.
- b. If the filter becomes damaged, soiled, or breathing becomes difficult, leave the contaminated area and dispose of the filter. If used in environments containing only oil aerosols, dispose of filter after 40 hours of use or 30 days, whichever is first.
- c. "Use and reuse of the P-series filters would be subject only to considerations of hygiene, damage, and increased breathing resistance."

- 9. Correctional Industries Instructors, facility supervisors and/or the EHC/designee periodic checks to ensure respiratory protection is being utilized in accordance with the training program.
- 10. Correctional Industries Instructors and/or facility supervisors and/or the EHC appropriately survey(s) work area conditions and degrees of employee/inmate worker exposure or stress.

11. The EHC conducts regular inspections and evaluations to determine the continued effectiveness of the respiratory protection program.

D. Occupational Noise Exposure

1. Protection against the effects of noise exposure is provided when the sound levels exceed those shown in Table G-16 (excerpt, 29 CFR 1910.95) when measured on the scale of a standard sound level meter at slow response.

**TABLE G-16**

DURATION PER DAY, HOURS	SOUND LEVEL DBA SLOW RESPONSE
8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1½	102
1	105
½	110
¼ or less	115

2. When employees/inmate workers are subjected to sound levels exceeding those listed in Table G-16, feasible administrative or engineering controls (i.e., other techniques and/or equipment) are utilized. If such controls fail to reduce sound levels within the levels of Table G-16, the EHC issues personal protective equipment (as specified by OSHA regulations) for use by affected employees/inmate workers.
3. The EHC monitors noise levels as part of his/her inspection process.