

Practice Education Guidelines for BC Respiratory Protection

GL#1-4

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Introduction and Purpose:

The Post Secondary Institution (PSI) is responsible for the health and safety of its students and on site PSI educators in all learning environments. This includes respiratory mask fit testing and education for respiratory protection.

The Health Care Organization (HCO) is responsible under WorkSafeBC legislation to provide an environment where work can be carried out without unnecessary exposure to airborne contaminants. Any individual providing care or coming into close contact with a patient with a known or suspected airborne spread illness requires the use of a respirator. When a respirator is required for protection, the WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulation requires specific protocols be followed.

The purpose of this guideline is to outline the respiratory protection requirements and protocols for students and PSI educators in practice education settings, including responses to potential/actual respiratory borne infectious disease outbreaks. Roles and responsibilities for PSIs and HCOs are articulated to ensure adequate respiratory protection during the placement experience.

Definitions

Also refer to: Standardized Guideline definitions in Practice Education Guideline (PEG) Introductory Module.

Respirator: a protective device that covers the worker's nose and mouth or the entire face and head to keep airborne contaminants out of the worker's respiratory system and provide a safe air supply ¹

Practice Guideline Standards:

Students and on site PSI educators will practice respiratory protection in accordance with:

- WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulations of BC Regulations and Guidelines and,
- Health Care Organization Respiratory Protection Program policies and guidelines.

Respirators must be worn in designated high risk areas and for high risk respiratory procedures in which the likelihood of the generation of aerosolized particles is considered to be high (See Appendix A: Where Airborne Infectious Agents May Be Encountered).

Students and on site PSI educators who directly observe or in any way provide care to patients with suspected, known, or probable cases of Tuberculosis (TB), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), or other similar airborne acute respiratory infections, MUST meet the following conditions:

- Be fit-tested for an approved respirator prior to the placement. Individuals who are required to use a respirator must be fit-tested on an annual basis to ensure a proper fit. WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation 8.40 stipulates that fit tests will be performed in accordance with procedures in CSA Standard

¹ WorkSafeBC. (2011). Breathe safer: how to use a respirator safely and start a respirator program. Workers' Compensation Board of BC. Retrieved January 28, 2013 from: www.worksafebc.com/publications

CAN/CSA-Z94.4-02, Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators. Regulations 8.2-8.4 further describe requirements governing fit testing². Fit tests are completed when workers are first fitted with respirators and then once per year afterward.

- Receive education prior to the start of the placement, on the correct use and care of respirators, respirator limitations, donning and doffing procedures and proper disposal in accordance with WorkSafeBC OHS Regulation Section 8.7.3.
- Carry proof of fit-testing on their person at all times during the placement experience, which includes the following information: .
 - Student or PSI educator name;
 - Post Secondary Institution name;
 - Fit-test date;
 - Brand, model and size of respirator successfully fit-tested;
 - Fit-testers name.

Learners who not permitted to directly observe or provide care to patients with suspected, known or probable cases of TB, SARS, or other similar acute airborne respiratory infections include:

- High school students;
- Visiting professionals who have not been fit-tested, or not fit-tested for the respirators available;
- Any other individual in a learning experience where the risk of exposure is inappropriate (e.g. experience not required to complete learning objectives, lack of adequate third party liability and/or personal accidental injury insurance).

If fit-testing has not been completed for students and/or on site PSI educators prior to the start of the placement, the HCO may delay the placement until the pre-requisite is met.

Roles, Responsibilities & Expectations:

Post Secondary Institution:

Communicate with the HCO to confirm any site-specific procedures related to the 'Respiratory Protection Program'.

Provide education for students and on-site PSI educators regarding respiratory protection and fit-tests for protection devices which meet WorkSafeBC standards.

Ensure fit-testing for all students and onsite PSI educator has occurred in accordance with WorkSafeBC standards prior to the start of the practice education placement. Confirm students and PSI educators are fit-tested for the respirator brand/model /size available in the practice education setting.

Ensure students and PSI educators are able to demonstrate competence of the correct uses, donning, doffing and limitations of respirators.

Ensure that students have written documentation of successful completion of a fit-test, that includes all required information outlined in practice standard guideline. Direct students to carry this information with

² WorkSafeBC. (2012). Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines. Available at: <http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/GuidelinePart8.asp>

them at all times during any practice placement.

Keep records of fit-testing completion for all students and on site PSI educators. Provide proof of fit-testing upon request by the HCO.

Confirm students and PSI Educators are fit-tested annually to ensure that the face seal remains effective, in accordance with WorkSafeBC Section 8.44.³

Health Care Organization:

Provide PSI access to the current HCO 'Respiratory Protection Program' information .

Inform the PSI of the brands and sizes of respiratory protection carried in the HCO. Report any changes in respiratory protection device supplier or styles to the PSI, to ensure students are fit-tested and educated on the currently available protection.

Supply students and on site PSI educators with respiratory protection required for care of patients during their placement.

Identify and inform PSIs which practice education settings are designated high risk practice education settings or have high risk activities (See Appendix A: Where Airborne Infectious Agents May Be Encountered) and require respiratory protection.

Students and PSI educators:

Maintain annual fit-testing certification or more frequently as conditions require (e.g. conditions that would impact facial seal).

If a situation arises where the student may be able to observe or participate in the care of a patient on airborne precautions, present proof of current fit-testing and demonstration to staff/PSI educator of proper donning and doffing of protective equipment prior to entering the care environment.

Individuals must only wear the respirator fit-tested for. If that type is not available and immediate fit-testing to a new mask is not available, students and PSI educators must not participate in activity where respirator are required.

Resources and References:

WorkSafeBC. (2011). Breathe safer: how to use a respirator safely and start a respirator program. Workers' Compensation Board of B.C. Available at: <http://www.worksafebc.com/publications>

WorkSafeBC. (2009). Controlling Exposure: Protecting Workers from Infectious Disease. Available at: http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/publication_index/c.asp

WorkSafeBC. (2012). Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines. Available at:

³ WorkSafeBC. (2012). Occupational Health and Safety Guidelines. Available at: <http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/GuidelinePart8.asp>

* indicates term is defined under 'Definitions' section

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/GuidelinePart8.asp>

Canadian Lung Association. (2007). *Canadian tuberculosis standards*. 6th edition. Government of Canada. Ottawa, Ontario. Available at: www.lung.ca/cts-sct/pdf/tbstand07_e.pdf

Guideline Review History:

Revision #	Date	Author(s)	Brief Description of Change (reason for change)
Original			
1	February 2013	Heather Straight (VCHA), Debbie McDougall (BCAHC)	Revised to new template Worksafe Regulations confirmed /updated Roles/responsibilities updated Appendix B: HA Respirator Brands/models and education supports deleted References updated

APPENDIX A: Where Airborne Infectious Agents May Be Encountered

The requirement for an N95 and fit-testing, as the result of exposure to airborne infectious agents, should only be considered if there is no other way in which the student is able to achieve his/her learning goals. If a student must enter such an environment, or if the student may potentially be required to enter such an environment, a fitted N95 is required.

Examples where airborne infectious agents may be encountered include, but are not limited to, the departments, occupations and tasks listed in the table below:

Sample High Risk	Sample High Risk	Sample High Risk Tasks
Emergency	Medicine	Tracheotomy
Intensive Care Unit Acute Medicine units Tuberculosis wards Operating Rooms	Nursing Laboratory Technologists	Suctioning Nebulizing therapy Bronchoscopy Percussive therapy Humidified oxygen Sputum induction
Post Anesthetic Recovery Bone Marrow Transplant Bronchoscopy/Respiratory clinics	Respiratory Therapists/Sciences Diagnostic Services Patient Escort Services Endoscopy staff Phlebotomists	Intubation and Extubation
Morgue/ Anatomical	Physical Therapy	

Note that the above table lists examples only.

In order to determine if students may potentially be exposed to airborne infectious agents, the PSI must consult with the HCO prior to placement.