

**North Carolina Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Division**

**Raleigh, North Carolina**

Field Information System

Standards Notice 60  
Revision 1

***Respirator Use Policy Under Cotton Dust Standard***

**A. Standard.**

1. 29 CFR 1910.1043(f)(1) The employer shall provide, at no cost to the employee, and assure the use of respirators which comply with the requirements of this paragraph (f) in the following circumstances:
  - a. During the time periods necessary to install or implement feasible engineering controls and work practice controls;
  - b. During maintenance and repair activities in which engineering and work practice controls are not feasible;
  - c. In work situations where feasible engineering and work practice controls are not yet sufficient to reduce exposure to or below the permissible exposure limits;
  - d. In operations specified under paragraph (g)(1) of this section; and
  - e. Whenever an employee requests a respirator.
2. 29 CFR 1910.1043(k)(1)(i): The employer shall establish and maintain an accurate record of all measurements required by paragraph (d) of this section.
3. 29 CFR 1910.1043(k)(1)(ii): The record shall include:
  - a. A log containing the items listed in paragraph IV(a) of Appendix A, and the dates, number, duration, and results of each of the samples taken, including a description of the procedure used to determine representative employee exposure;
  - b. The type of protective devices worn, if any, and length of time worn; and
  - c. The names, social security numbers, job classifications, and exposure levels of employees whose exposure the measurement is intended to represent.
4. 29 CFR 1910.1043(k)(1)(iii): The employer shall maintain this record for at least 20 years

**B. Discussion.**

On December 30, 1980, federal OSHA issued a notice of respirator-use enforcement policy under the cotton dust standard, 29 CFR 1910.1043. This

policy was issued pursuant to the administrative stays of paragraphs 1910.1043(f)(1)(i) and (iii), published at 45 FR 64872 (September 30, 1980), which expired on December 15, 1980. The respirator-use enforcement policy required that respirators be worn to the extent necessary to assure that each employee's 8-hour time-weighted average exposure to cotton dust is maintained below the permissible exposure limit (PEL), thereby permitting the partial shift wearing of respirators.

Federal OSHA amended the final standard for occupational exposure to cotton dust on December 13, 1985 (50 FR 51120-51179) with an effective date of February 11, 1986. North Carolina did not, however, adopt these changes; the State chose to continue enforcement of the 1978 standard which was felt to afford greater worker protection against cotton dust. Following a reevaluation of the efficacy of the amended standard in comparison with the 1987 standard, North Carolina adopted the amended final rule for occupational exposure to cotton dust on February 5, 1993 with an effective date of the same.

This standard notice serves to establish and clarify a uniform policy that NC OSH will follow regarding enforcement of the use of respirators with respect to occupational cotton dust exposure.

**C. Interpretation.**

1. Partial shift respirator usage as a means of complying with the cotton dust PEL is unacceptable. If it is not feasible to reduce cotton dust below the PEL(s) through engineering controls, respirators, including disposable respirators, must be worn *for the entire work shift*.
2. This policy applies to employee exposure to cotton dust in all work shifts, including those exceeding eight (8) hours.

**D. Enforcement Policy.**

1. Effective immediately, a citation will be recommended for violations of 1910.1043(f)(1)(i) and (iii) whenever employees are permitted to wear respirators on a partial-shift basis to comply with the appropriate cotton dust PEL.
2. Citations for violations of 1910.1043(f)(1)(i) and (iii) will be classified as serious and grouped in accordance with Chapter V of the North Carolina Operations Manual.

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E. Date: 6/21/93

