

May 8, 2020

Dear Participants,

The Deep South Center, following the recommendations from NIOSH has postponed all Spirometry courses until we receive follow-up guidance in reopening the courses.

This recommendation is consistent with current guidance statements from the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) and the American Thoracic Society (ATS) to postpone elective pulmonary function tests. The guidance is based on continuing concerns that some individuals undergoing pulmonary function testing could have unrecognized COVID-19 and could create an infectious hazard by performing forced expiratory maneuvers.

With this being said, the April and now the June initial courses have been postponed. The Deep South Center, being a NIOSH ERC, is committed to the well-being, health and safety of all workers and we are researching safety measures with CDC guidance for when these restrictions are lifted and we can safely resume the Spirometry initial courses.

Below is a special notice from NIOSH on the additional extensions for expiring Spirometry Refresher certifications:

**Special Notice:** *NIOSH-approved Course Certificate Extensions*

*The NIOSH Spirometry Training Program is extending NIOSH-approved Spirometry Training Course certificates with expiration dates in calendar years 2019-2020 for 18 months from expiration (5 years + 7 month grace period). Total extension from initial course is now 7 years, 1 month.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/spirometry/training.html>

*Depending on conditions over time, additional adjustments may be made as necessary, because performing forced vital capacity maneuvers has the potential to generate respiratory aerosols, the NIOSH Spirometry Training Course Program strongly recommends that spirometry training courses remain closed until further notice.*

On a footnote, please access our website, [www.uab.edu/soph/dsc](http://www.uab.edu/soph/dsc) and our Facebook page, Deep South Center, for guidance from the CDC and NIOSH for links to recommendations on best safety practices during this pandemic and a list of NIOSH certified respirators. Also, posted are links to the NIOSH Spirometry training videos for those who are awaiting the refresher course, keeping in mind that these informational videos do not suffice for certification and training for the initial or refresher certification courses. You are required to take and complete a course from a NIOSH-approved sponsor and be current on your certification to perform tests.

**NIOSH Statement:**

*Federal requirements for health surveillance of certain workers exposed to cotton, coal mine, and silica dusts specify that spirometry testing must be performed by technicians with valid certificates from a NIOSH-approved Spirometry Training Course.*

*Students who successfully complete a NIOSH-approved spirometry training course will receive a certificate from the course sponsor. A certificate is awarded solely to the student for successfully completing the class and is not transferable to any organization, company, or institution that may have provided financial assistance or reimbursement.*

Your health and safety and that of our faculty and is most important to us and we hope to see you in August. Please direct any questions to Laura Wilson, [wilson75@uab.edu](mailto:wilson75@uab.edu).

Stay safe-Stay well.

Sincerely,

The Deep South Center for Occupational Health and Safety