

N95 RESPIRATOR TRAINING

The following training guide covers the Cal/OSHA (8 CCR Section 5144) training requirements for disposable N95 filtering facepiece respirator users.

I. What Is An N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirator?



N95 filtering facepiece respirators are *air-purifying* respirators certified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to have filter efficiency level of 95% or greater against particulate aerosols free of oil and greater than 0.3 microns in size.

Examples of airborne contaminants that N95 respirators filter out include dusts, fumes, mists and microbial agents such as tuberculosis bacteria & flu virus.

II. When Are N95 Respirators Required?

Depending on your job responsibilities, N95 respirators may be required as personal protective equipment. Individuals may be required to wear N95 for tasks such as entering isolation rooms, and other activities involving close contact with potentially infected persons.

III. Approval for Required N95 Use:

Per Cal/OSHA, personnel who are required by their employer to wear respirators, shall be approved after completing the following:

- 1) Medical Evaluation/ Clearance: to determine if users are physically fit to wear a respirator.
- 2) Training: to ensure users are familiar with N95 respirators, their proper use and protective limitations. Training consists of reviewing this document and taking the **training quiz** and is required on an **annual** basis.
- 3) Fit-Testing: to determine which respirator model/size provides the proper fit for the user. Such fit-test is required on an **annual** basis.

IV. Capabilities and Limitations of N95 Respirators

- 1) N95 respirators **ONLY** filter out particulate contaminants.
- 2) N95 respirators do not protect you from:
 - Chemical vapors/ gases
 - Oxygen deficient atmosphere
 - High risk exposures such as those created by aerosol-generating procedures (i.e., bronchoscopy, autopsy) and asbestos handling.
- 3) N95 respirators are disposable – one time use only.

V. Effective Use of N95 Respirators

The effectiveness of N95 respirators relies on how well the respirator seals to the user's face.

To ensure N95 respirators work effectively:

- 1) **ONLY** use the respirator model and size for which you have been fit-tested by EH&S. N95 respirators vary by model and size. Improper fit will likely result in inadequate protection.
- 2) **DO NOT** use the respirator with beards or other facial hair, which may interfere with the direct contact between your face and the sealing surface of the respirator.
- 3) Conduct a seal-check **every time** you put the respirator on (before entering area of concern).
- 4) If the respirator becomes damaged, soiled or you experience problems with using the respirator (breathing becomes difficult, dizziness, irritation, etc.), leave the work area immediately and remove the respirator when you are no longer exposed to the potential airborne hazard. Inform your supervisor about the issue.

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VI. Further Medical Evaluation/ Training/ Fit-Testing

- 1) Medical re-evaluation is required if user reports medical signs/ symptoms that are related to the ability to use a respirator, or if changes in the work place/ activities may result in a substantial increase in the physiological burden placed on the respirator user. For N95 medical re-evaluation, call 725-5308.
- 2) Fit-Testing needs to be repeated annually and whenever changes in the work place/ activities or type of respirator used affect the respirator fit [i.e. facial/ dental changes and changes in body weight (more than 10-20 lbs)].
- 3) Training needs to be repeated annually and whenever inadequacies in user's knowledge or use of the respirator indicate that the user has not retained the requisite understanding or skill to wear a respirator.

VII. Inspection

Prior to wearing the N95 respirator, inspect the respirator for damage and contamination. Verify all components of the respirator are in good condition (e.g. straps, nose piece, etc.)

VIII. Wearing The Respirator & Seal-Checking Procedures

1) Hold the respirator in one hand, with the nose piece at the fingertips and let the head straps hang loosely in front of the respirator.	
2) Place respirator under the chin, with the nosepiece up. While holding the respirator with one hand, pull the top strap over your head, resting it at the top back of your head. Pull the bottom strap over your head, and place it around your neck, below your ears.	
3) Using <u>both</u> hands, mold the nose piece to the shape of your nose by pushing inward with your fingertips. Note that pinching the molding piece with 1 hand will likely result in less effective respirator fit.	
4) Seal-check: cover respirator completely w/ both hands, and exhale sharply. If air blows on your face or eyes, readjust the respirator according to Steps 3 & 4. Do not use respirator until you pass the seal-check (no leakage).	
5) To remove the respirator, hold the respirator with one gloved hand. With the other hand, pull the bottom strap over your head, and then pull the top strap off. <i>If respirator was used in a medical facility or if there is any evidence that respirator may be contaminated, dispose of it as a bio-hazardous waste.</i>	

If you have any questions regarding N95 respirators, contact Stanford Univ. EH&S at 723-0448