



Voluntary N95 Respirator Use

The University of Maryland is committed to providing a work environment that is free of recognized hazards. This fact sheet details voluntary respirator use and guidance on what it entails.

What is voluntary respirator use?

Employees who voluntarily use respiratory protective equipment are covered in the University of Maryland Respiratory Protection Program. Voluntary use is choosing to wear a respirator when there is no regulatory or exposure-based requirement. Voluntary use of respirators does not carry the same program requirements as required use.

The University Respiratory Protection Program is available at the following link:

<http://www.essr.umd.edu/os/respirator/manual/resp.pdf>

What are the program requirements for voluntary respirator use?

Voluntary use of a filtering facepiece (i.e. N95) does not require medical clearance or fit testing prior to use. Employees who choose to voluntarily wear respirators are responsible for reading and following Appendix D of OSHA 29CFR 1910.134, included in this document, which details respirator limitations and use, is included as an attachment.

How to Properly Put on and Take off a Disposable Respirator

WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY BEFORE PUTTING ON AND TAKING OFF THE RESPIRATOR.

If you have used a respirator before that fit you, use the same make, model and size.

Inspect the respirator for damage. If your respirator appears damaged, DO NOT USE IT. Replace it with a new one.

Do not allow facial hair, hair, jewelry, glasses, clothing, or anything else to prevent proper placement or come between your face and the respirator.

Follow the instructions that come with your respirator.¹

Putting On The Respirator



Position the respirator in your hands with the nose piece at your fingertips.



Cup the respirator in your hand allowing the headbands to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator under your chin with the nosepiece up.



The top strap (on single or double strap respirators) goes over and rests at the top back of your head. The bottom strap is positioned around the neck and below the ears. Do not crisscross straps.



Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nose clip (if present). Slide fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to mold the nose area to the shape of your nose.

Checking Your Seal²



Place both hands over the respirator, take a quick breath in to check whether the respirator seals tightly to the face.



Place both hands completely over the respirator and exhale. If you feel leakage, there is not a proper seal.



If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nosepiece as described. If air leaks at the mask edges, re-adjust the straps along the sides of your head until a proper seal is achieved.

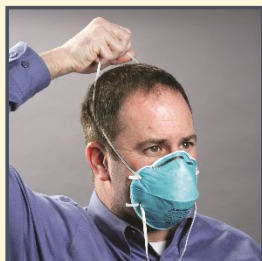


If you cannot achieve a proper seal due to air leakage, ask for help or try a different size or model.

Removing Your Respirator



DO NOT TOUCH the front of the respirator! It may be contaminated!



Remove by pulling the bottom strap over back of head, followed by the top strap, without touching the respirator.



Discard in waste container. WASH YOUR HANDS!

Employers must comply with the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard, 29 CFR 1910.134 if respirators are used by employees performing work-related duties.

1 Manufacturer instructions for many NIOSH approved disposable respirators can be found at www.cdc.gov/niosh/nppt/topics/respirators/disp_part/

2 According to the manufacturer's recommendations

For more information call 1-800-CDC-INFO or go to <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nppt/topics/respirators/>



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OSHA Voluntary Respirator Use Fact Sheet

Appendix D to Sec. 1910.134

(Non-Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators when not required Under the Standard

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn.

Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear Page 10 respirators to avoid exposures to hazards even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

Read and understood by:

Employee Name and UID

Employee Signature

**Supervisors should keep this documentation with their employee files.