

Q: Do employees need medical clearance before they are given an N95 mask?

A: Use of N95 masks is not mandatory for schools, so they do not need to be cleared medically by the college or a personal care provider; however, we must follow the California Code of Regulations pertaining to respirators. To comply, we must provide notice about voluntary use of N95 masks to all employees who wish to use this mask, provide instructions/training on proper use (a formal fit test is *not* required), and document that our employees have received the proper training and information. Employees should sign the document and return it to their IMS. Employees should not use an N95 mask, and should consult with their doctor, if breathing is difficult.

Q: How often should N95 masks be replaced?

A: We must follow the guidelines from the manufacturer, but the general recommendation from the CDC is to replace if it is hard to breathe while wearing them, and if they are wet or dirty. Further, N95s should not be used with other masks or respirators. More information is available at the links to the right.

Q: Are there any requirements for proper fitting?

A: Yes. The mask must be tight fitting, and there should be no gap between your face and the mask. If air seeps out of the mask while breathing, it is not a proper fit. The attached memo includes the instruction link on YouTube, as well as written instructions from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and CDC.

How to Use N95 Respirator Video from Cal/OSHA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmJxzGXelvo>

Important Links

CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html>

CDPH:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Get-the-Most-out-of-Masking.aspx#>

Q: Can we be provided with KN95 masks instead, if that's what an employee prefers?

A: Yes; however, KN95 masks offer far less protection though they are listed as an acceptable face covering by the CDPH. If employees request a KN95 mask, we should provide them, but with the disclosure and information about its level of protectiveness. It may offer slightly more protection than a surgical mask, but may not be reliable. More information can be found in the links below.

In brief, the CDC states that international masks do not follow the same standards, and "NIOSH review of documents from companies based in China has found a significant amount of falsified documentation. While documentation is crucial, it is not a reliable indicator of the product's performance."

Q: Are there any requirements for KN95 masks?

A: The KN95 mask is still an N95 mask, so the same requirements (training and acknowledgement) apply. Please see the first FAQ for more information.

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/npptl/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/npptl/topics/respirators/>



CS 207843
DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2010-133