

## **Summary of Respirator Requirements For Pandemic**

“Implementation and enforcement of all standard precautions, including appropriate use of facial (eye, nose and mouth) protection when caring for respiratory patients, should be prioritized in all healthcare facilities in order to mitigate pandemic influenza transmission” p. 15 – OSHA Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response guidance.

“Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, procedures should be used for all patients with respiratory symptoms (e.g. – coughing and sneezing). The impact of covering coughs and sneezes and placing a mask on a coughing/sneezing patient on the containment of respiratory droplets and secretions or the transmission of respiratory infections has not been quantified. However, any measure that limits the dispersion of respiratory droplets should reduce the opportunity for transmission. Masking some patients may be difficult in which case the emphasis should be on cough etiquette.” p. 21.

“Healthcare workers transporting unmasked patients with suspected or confirmed pandemic influenza infected patients should wear a N95 or higher NIOSH certified respirator.” – p.22.

“If tolerated by patients, place a surgical mask on all patients with respiratory illness to contain droplets expelled during coughing. If this is not possible (would further compromise respiratory status or is difficult for patient to wear), have the patient cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing, or use the most practical alternative to contain respiratory secretions.” – p. 23.

“Healthcare workers transporting patients with influenza like illness should use a respirator (N95 or higher). If respirators are not available, healthcare workers should wear a surgical mask.” - p.23

“Train persons who will likely use particulate respirators on how to put them on and how to perform user seal checks.” – p. 24.

“Provide respiratory etiquette educational materials and supplies to coughing individuals.” – p. 24

“A comprehensive pandemic influenza preparedness should also address airborne transmission to ensure that healthcare workers are protected against all routes of exposure. Establishment of a comprehensive respiratory protection program with all of the elements of OSHA’s Respiratory Protection Standard (29CFR1910.134) is needed to achieve the highest of protection. Appendix C of this OSHA document has detailed information.” - p.27.

“It is important for healthcare facility to consider respiratory protection for essential personnel to assure that employees are ready, willing and able to care for general population.” - p. 27

“Respirators are designed to reduce an individual’s exposure to airborne contaminants. Surgical mask is designed to prevent contamination of a sterile field or work environment by trapping bacteria and respiratory secretions that are expelled by the wearer. Also, used as physical barrier to protect healthcare worker from hazards such as blood/body fluids.” - p.28

“Respirators are designed to provide a tight seal between the sealing surface of the respirator and person’s face.” - p.28

“Disposable or filtering facepiece respirators are where the entire respirator facepiece is comprised of filter material. It is discarded when it becomes unsuitable for further use due to excessive breathing resistance (particulate clogging the filter), unacceptable contamination/soiling or physical damage.” - p.28

“A list of all NIOSH certified disposable respirators is available at [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respirators/disp\\_part/particlist.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respirators/disp_part/particlist.html). - p.29

“Recent HHS/CDC infection control guidance documents provide recommendations that healthcare workers protect themselves from diseases potentially spread through the air by wearing a fit tested respirator at least as protective as NIOSH certified N95 respirator.” – p. 29

“Once worn in the presence of an infectious patient, the respirators should be considered potentially contaminated with infectious materials and touching the outside of device should be avoided. Upon leaving patient room, the disposable respirator should be removed and discarded, followed by proper hand hygiene. However, if a sufficient supply of respirators is not available during a pandemic, healthcare facilities may consider reuse as long as device has not been obviously soiled or damaged (creased or torn) and it retains its ability to function properly. Reuse of a disposable respirator should be limited to a single wearer. If disposable respirators need to be reused by an individual user after caring for infectious patients, employees should implement or provide for safe reuse to prevent contamination through contact with infectious materials on outside of respirator. One way is to consider wearing a faceshield that does not interfere with the fit or seal over the respirator. After removing respirator, either hang it in designated area or place it in a bag and store in manner that prevents its physical and functional integrity from being compromised.” - p. 30

“Respirators with exhalation valves (valves open to release exhaled breath) should not be placed on a patient to contain droplets and prevent spread of infectious particles – surgical masks can be used for this purpose.” – p. 30

“Acquiring adequate supplies of appropriate respirators, ensuring that they fit key personnel, conducting appropriate training and performing other aspects of respiratory protection can be accomplished in advance of influenza outbreak.”

“Where respirator use is required, the employer shall establish and implement a written respiratory protection program with worksite specific procedures.” – 1910.134(c)(1)

- Procedures for selecting appropriate respirator for use in workplace
- Fit testing tight fitting respirators
- Cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, repairing, removing from service or discarding, and otherwise monitoring respirators as well as schedule
- Ensure adequate air supply, quantity and flow of breathing air for atmosphere supplied respirators
- Provisions for medical evaluation of employees who must use respirators
- Training
- Regular evaluation of program

“Where respirator use is not required: (1910.134(c)(2):

**1910.134(c)(2)(i)** An employer may provide respirators at the request of employees or permit employees to use their own respirators if the employer determines that such respirator use will not in itself create a hazard. If the employer determines that any voluntary respirator use is permissible, the employer shall provide the respirator users with the information contained in Appendix D to this section (“Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard”): and

**1910.134(c)(2)(ii)** In addition, the employer must establish and implement those elements of a written respiratory protection program necessary to ensure that any employee using a respirator voluntarily is medically able to use that respirator, and that the respirator is cleaned, stored, and maintained so that its use does not present a health hazard to the user. Exception: Employers are not required to include in a written respiratory protection program those employees whose only use of respirators involves the voluntary use of filtering facepieces (dust masks).

Consideration:

In event of pandemic, regular surgical masks offered to all patients and staff members who do not have direct contact with patients. For those staff members having direct patient contact, N95 respirators offered on voluntary basis.