

Newsletter



“Wearing Your Filtering Facepiece Respirator”

General Information:

There is much talk these days with COVID-19 about the wearing of masks to cover your nose and mouth when out in public and in the workplace. If you research the studies and the various government sites, evidence indicate that masks such as the professionally manufactured N95 clearly helps to prevent the spread of diseases such as COVID-19. As part of the respiratory protection requirements, employees must be medically cleared to don a tight-fitting respirator, which includes N95 masks, and the mask must be fit tested to the user.

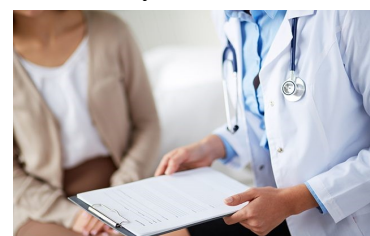
Prepare to Use Filtering Facepiece Respirator:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer before handling the mask.
- Inspect respirator for visible damage. Obtain a new respirator if damaged.
- If you wear glasses, remove glasses before putting on the respirator.

Medical Clearance:

Employees with underlying medical conditions may put themselves at risk if they work while wearing a N95 mask. Therefore, OSHA requires a medical evaluation before employees can wear a respirator. There are a few steps to the respirator medical clearance:

1. Provide mask users with *respirator medical approval form* found in (Appendix C) and *medical questionnaire* form found in (Appendix E) of the Respiratory Protection Policy, which must be reviewed by a Licensed Health Care Professional (LHCP).
2. Depending on the results of the questionnaire, the LHCP will either clear the employee for N95 use with no restrictions or refer the employee for a follow-up, in-person medical evaluation.
3. Mask user needs to complete Part 1 of the form and LHCP needs to complete Part 2 of the form found in (Appendix C).
4. Mask user shall provide RMS with the completed Form (Appendix C) and the provider medical report for fit test.



Fit Testing:

If an employee is required to use a tight-fitting respirator at work, such as a N95 mask, then the employee must be fit tested with the mask prior to use. Fit testing is done to be sure that the respirator's facepiece fits the user's face, and must be reassessed annually (note that Federal OSHA has waived annual fit-testing requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic, but initial fit testing is still required).



Safety Training:

The respirator training program can be found by login to UW-Eau Claire Canvas and click on “Respirator Use and Safety”.

