

## N95 Respirator Voluntary Use Guidance

The following guide covers Stanford's requirements for voluntary use of N95 filtering facepiece respirators, per Cal/OSHA Title 8 CCR 5144.

### Approval for Voluntary N95 Use:

An employee who would like to voluntarily wear an N95 respirator shall

1. Complete a Voluntary Respirator Use Agreement ([Appendix D](#)).
2. Submit a copy of the completed Voluntary Respirator Use Agreement form to your supervisor for their records (retain records for as long as you use the respirator). Voluntary respirator users do not need further training or fit testing.

### 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.

In special situations, N95 respirators may be required protection, such as when entering patient isolation rooms, or when conducting other high-risk activities.



### II. 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 atmospheres,
  - High risk exposures such as those created by aerosol-generating procedures (i.e., bronchoscopy, autopsy) and asbestos handling.
3. N95 respirators are disposable and intended for one time use.

*Continue on next page...*

### III. 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. 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.
2. Conduct a seal-check every time you put the respirator on (before entering the area of concern).
3. 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.

### IV. 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.).

### V. Wearing The Respirator & Seal-Checking Procedures



To remove the respirator, hold the respirator with one hand. With the other hand, pull the bottom strap over your head, and then pull the top strap off. ***If a 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/medical waste.***

**For questions regarding voluntary N95 respirator use, contact EH&S at (650) 723-0448.**