



Syracuse University Environmental Health and Safety Services

Guidance for Voluntary Use of a Respirator

This guidance document provides a general summary of the requirements, outlined in the University's Respiratory Protection Program, that an employee and their supervisor must follow to allow the employee to voluntarily wear a respirator in the workplace.

If an employee or supervisor identifies a work activity that may expose an employee to a harmful airborne contaminant, the supervisor shall contact Environmental Health & Safety Services (EHSS) to conduct an assessment to determine if a hazard is present. If the hazard is present, and it cannot be controlled by means other than respiratory protection, a respirator will be assigned to the employee for that activity. Assigning a respiratory to an employee automatically enrolls them in the University's Respiratory Protection Program requiring them to receive annual training, fit testing, periodic medical evaluations, and an appropriate respirator at no cost.

If respiratory protection is not required by EHSS, an employee may request to voluntarily wear a disposable, N95 respirator. Voluntary use of a N95 respirator does not require enrollment in the University's Respiratory Protection Program. However, individuals requesting to use a N95 respirator must acknowledge their decision to voluntarily use a N95 respirator and their understanding of the requirements associated with voluntary use, by completing the attached Voluntary Respiratory Use Acknowledgement form.

N95 Style Disposable Respirators



Voluntary use of N95 respirators may only be used to control exposure to nuisance levels of particulates (i.e. dust), allergens and/or nuisance levels of certain chemicals, gases, or vapors.

N95 respirators do not provide oxygen.

N95 respirators are NIOSH certified and are labeled with a NIOSH approval number on the face piece and/or product packaging.

Voluntary N95 Respiratory Use Requirements

Supervisors in Areas Where Voluntary N95 Respiratory Use is Requested and is to Occur Must:

- Clearly define the activity for which the voluntary N95 respirator use is requested and/or allowed.
- Contact EHSS to perform a hazard assessment to verify the planned activity does not require the employee to be enrolled in the University's Respiratory Protection Program.
- Ensure personnel choosing to voluntarily wear a N95 respirator receive a copy of EHSS's Guidance for Voluntary Use of a Respirator (which includes Appendix D to OSHA's 29 CFR 1910.134), and have completed and submitted EHSS's Voluntary Respirator Use Acknowledgement form.
- Maintain signed copies of the Voluntary Respirator Use Acknowledgment Form for all active voluntary N95 respirator use.

Employees Requesting and Choosing to Voluntarily Use a N95 Respirator Must:

- Inform their supervisor of their desire to voluntarily use a N95 respirator and the activity(s) they intend to wear it for. The supervisor will notify EHSS who will verify that the planned activity(s) does not require the employee to be enrolled in the University's Respiratory Protection Program.
- Once EHSS verifies voluntary use of a N95 respirator is appropriate for the intended activity(s), review OSHA's Appendix D provided below.
- Complete and submit to their supervisor, the Voluntary Respirator Use Acknowledgement.



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- Procure a N95 respirator (the cost of purchasing a respirator is at the discretion of the department).
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions provided with the N95 respirator.
- Know the capabilities and limitations of the N95 respirator.
- Properly use, maintain, and care for the N95 respirator.
- Ensure the N95 respirator is worn appropriately, and has a good fit in direct contact with the their face. Facial hair may hinder obtaining a good fit.
- Notify the supervisor if experiencing adverse health effects or if difficulties develop while wearing the respirator.

Appendix D to 29 CFR 1910.134

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 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 heed 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.



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Voluntary Respirator Use Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I intend to voluntarily use a N95 respirator for activities at Syracuse University in accordance with the information and guidelines outlined in EHSS's Guidance for Voluntary Use of a Respirator. I will ensure that my voluntary use of a N95 respirator complies with all voluntary respirator use requirements and that my supervisor has been advised of my voluntarily use of a N95 respirator. I will ensure that if I perform activities which require respiratory protection and subsequent participation in the University's Respiratory Protection Program, I will notify my supervisor.

Name

SUI ID

PI/Supervisor

Department

Reason for Voluntary Respirator Use (*describe activities to be conducted, location, type of containment, etc.*)

Signature

Date

Completed Voluntarily Respiratory Use Acknowledgement forms must be submitted to your supervisor.

