

<b>Town of Kernersville Safety and Health Policy and Procedure Manual</b>	<b>Respiratory Protection Program (N95) Section 0180</b>	<b>Date 3/20</b>	<b>Revised</b>
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## **I. Purpose**

To establish and provide a respiratory protection program that will provide optimal safety for Town of Kernersville employees who may be required to wear N95 respirators during crisis while carrying out their essential tasks.

## **II. Scope**

This policy applies to all department personnel required to wear an N95 respirator. It does not cover Police and Fire personnel as these departments have a separate established Respirator Protection Program administered by their designated safety personnel.

## **III. Standard**

General Industry standard 1910.134 of the Occupational Health Standards requires a Respiratory Protection Program be established whenever respirators are required to be used in an occupational setting. This program applies to all employees assigned to wear respirators and is a guideline to prevent employee overexposure to atmospheric contaminants and oxygen deficient atmospheres which are potentially harmful to health. The use of respirators in this policy refers only to the protection of employees against biological hazards such as a pandemic outbreak.

## **IV. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Employer:**

Determine the need for N95 respiratory protection. Establish and maintain a Respiratory Protection Program in compliance with the requirements of 1910.134 of the Occupational Health Standards.

Provide all employees in the program with respirators appropriate to the purpose intended (N95).

### **Employee:**

Wear assigned N95 respirator when and where required and in the manner in which they were trained.

Care for and maintain their respirators as instructed, and store them in a clean and sanitary location.

Inform supervisor if the respirator no longer fits well, and request a new one that fits properly.

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**Program Administrator:**

Shall be the Safety and Risk Manager who will oversee medical clearance, pulmonary function testing, respiratory fit testing and all applicable training for these employees required to wear N95 masks.

**V. Requirements**

Medical evaluations are necessary for personnel required to use respirators prior to use. Using a respirator may cause physical burdens that vary with the type of work in which the respirator is used. Each employee must undergo a medical evaluation to determine the employee's ability to use the N95 respirator prior to a fit test.

The Safety and Risk Manager shall identify a Physician or other Licensed Health Care Professional (PLHCP) to administer a medical questionnaire to each employee. The questionnaire shall be administered confidentially and the employee will take the questionnaire with them to the exam. The questionnaire will determine the need for a follow-up physical examination. The employee shall have the opportunity to discuss the questionnaire and examination results with the (PLHCP) if desired. A summary of the Pulmonary Function Test (PFT) and medical evaluation from the PLHCP shall be sent to the Safety and Risk Manager.

Additional medical evaluations will be provided under the following circumstances:

The physician or supervisor informs the Safety and Risk Manager that the employee needs to be reevaluated.

Employee reports signs and/or symptoms related to their ability to use a respirator, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pains, or wheezing.

Observations made during fit testing and program evaluation indicates an issue.

A change occurs in workplace conditions that may result in an increased physiological burden on the employee.

The Safety and Risk Manager will arrange an appropriate time for the exam and shall be paid by the employer. If a follow-up or a referral to the employee's Primary Care Physician (PCP) is needed, the employee will be responsible for this evaluation and treatment. Should the PCP determine the employee cannot wear the N95 mask, the employee, supervisor and Department Head will be advised. If the employee wants to voluntarily wear the mask, observance of the General Industry

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standard 1910.134 of the Occupational Health Respiratory Protection Program requires the employee to read, understand and sign the Appendix D form. The Safety and Risk Manager shall be responsible for supplying the employee with this form and training them on the proper usage, cleaning, and storage of the N95 mask. The Safety and Risk Manager will also be responsible for this record keeping.

## **VI. Fit Testing Procedures**

All employees wearing N95 respirators must be fit tested with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator that will be used during recognized crisis or situations. The Respiratory Protection Program Administrator (Fire Department designee) will oversee the fit testing of these employees.

Fit tests will be conducted on all employees who use N95 respirators following the initial medical evaluation, at least annually thereafter, or whenever the employer observes or receives a report of changes in the employee's physical condition that could affect respirator fit, or the employee states that the fit of the respirator is unacceptable.

Factors that may affect mask fit are:

Significant weight change, facial scarring, dental changes, reconstructive or cosmetic facial surgery or any other condition that would interfere with mask fit.

Fit tests will be administered using an OSHA-accepted qualitative test for smell and taste reaction. The protocol used will be stated on the fit test record for each employee. Fit testing shall follow OSHA's mandatory guidelines for qualitative testing protocol.

## **VI. Respirator Training**

The Safety and Risk Manager will provide training to those who use N95 respirators. The training will be comprehensive, understandable, and occur annually. Proper documentation of this training shall occur.

The Safety and Risk Manager and the Fire Department designee shall ensure that each employee can demonstrate knowledge of at least the following:

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Why the respirator is necessary and how improper fit, usage, or maintenance can compromise the protective effect of the respirator.

What the limitations and capabilities of the respirator are.

How to inspect, put on and remove, use, and check the seals of the respirator.

What the procedures are for maintenance and storage of the respirator.

How to recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators.

The general requirements of this program.

Retraining shall be administered annually or when inadequacies appear necessary to ensure safe respirator use.

## **VII. Respirator Usage**

Designated employees will use their N95 respirators under conditions specified by Town Manager's authority during a Public Health Emergency Crisis and in accordance with the training they received. All employees shall conduct user seal checks every time they use the respirator by cupping both hands around the mouth and taking deep breaths as trained. Should they feel incoming air around the shield, employees will readjust or tighten their masks until no inflowing air is felt around the edges of the N95 respirator.

Employees are not permitted to wear headphones, jewelry, or other articles that may interfere with the face piece to face seal. This may also include glasses if they interfere with the seal.

## **VIII. N-95 Filtering Face Piece Respirator**

This Respiratory Protection Program applies only to the N-95 respirator and use of any other respiratory protection device must be preapproved by the program administrator and appropriate testing shall be done.

N-95 filtering face piece respirators mask shall be worn when there is a threat of a potential exposure to airborne contaminants or pathogens such as tuberculosis, SARS or COVID - 19.

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Employees should visually inspect the N95 respirator to determine if the structural and functional integrity of the respirator has been compromised. Over time, components such as the straps, nose bridge, and nose foam material may degrade, which can affect the quality of the fit and seal. If the structural and functional integrity of any part of the respirator is compromised, or if a successful user seal check cannot be performed, discard the respirator.

Cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, shall be completed before and after each use of the mask. Should the N95 respirator become contaminated and rendered useless, the mask will be discarded and the employee should contact the Safety and Risk Manager for additional respirators.

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## **§1910.134 Appendix D**

Information for employees using respirators when not required under the standard (mandatory)

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 respirator 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.

[63 FR 1270, Jan. 8, 1998; 63 FR 20098, 20099, Apr. 23, 1998, as amended at 69 FR 46993, Aug. 4, 2004; 71FR 16672, Apr. 3, 2006]

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Employee Name – Print

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Employee Signature

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Date