SUBJECT: Respiratory Protection Program For Disposable Particulate Respirators (N95 Mask)

POLICY:
The purpose of this program is to ensure that all employees required to wear respiratory protection as a condition of their employment are protected from respiratory hazards through the proper use of respirators. All respirator use will occur within the context of a comprehensive program as per the standards set forth by OSHA or (for public employers in NYS) the Department of Labor, Public Employee Safety and Health Program (PESH). This requires a written program, medical evaluation, training, and fit testing.

Program Scope and Application
This program applies to all employees who may require respiratory protection for infection control purposes during normal work operations and during non-routine or emergency situations. This program is limited to the use of disposable particulate respirators (minimum N95). The types of work activities which require employees to wear disposable N95 respirators are outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Activity to be Performed</th>
<th>Where, When, Other Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having any patient contact</td>
<td>When entering isolation room of patient on airborne precautions (such as TB)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing direct patient care and/or having close patient contact</td>
<td>In patient care areas when either CDC or the NYSDOH recommend the use of N95 precautions. For suspicious or confirmed infectious diseases when performing aerosolized treatments or procedures.</td>
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Program Components
- Program Administration
- Program Scope/Application
- Identifying Work Hazards
- Respirator Selection
- Medical Evaluations
- Fit Testing
- Proper Respirator Use
- Cleaning and Disinfecting
- Inspection and Storage
Program Administration
Infection Control Preventionist will be responsible for the administration of the respiratory protection program and thus is called the Respiratory Protection Program Administrator.

Roles and Responsibilities

Respiratory Program Administrator (RPA)
- Identify work areas, processes, or tasks that require respiratory protection.
- Monitor OSHA/PESH standards for changes and revise policy as needed.
- Monitor CDC and DOH recommendations and guidelines as they relate to respiratory protection and other recommended infection control measures.
- Select respiratory protection products. Involve users in selection whenever possible.
- Monitor respirator use to ensure that respirators are used in accordance with this program, training received, and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Coordinate medical evaluations with licensed healthcare professional.
- Evaluate any feedback information or surveys.
- Arrange for and/or conduct training and fit testing.
- Ensure proper storage and maintenance of respiratory protection equipment.
- Conducting a periodic evaluation of the program and revising as needed.

Infection Control Preventionist/Supervisor Responsibility:
- Infection Control Preventionist/Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the respiratory protection program is implemented in their particular units.
- In addition to being knowledgeable about the program requirements for their own protection, supervisors must also ensure that the program is understood and followed by the employees under their charge.
  - Duties of the Supervisor include:
    - Knowing the hazards in the area in which they work.
    - Knowing types of respirators that need to be used.
    - Ensuring the respiratory program and worksite procedures are followed.
    - Ensuring employees receive medical evaluations.
    - Ensuring employees receive annual training and fit testing.
    - Ensuring staff use respirators, as required.
    - Notifying Respiratory Protection Program Administrator of any problems with respirator use of changes in work processes that would impact program.
    - Ensuring proper storage and maintenance of respirators in their unit.
Employee
- Participate in all training and fit testing
- Wear respirator when indicated
- Maintain equipment
- Inspect respirator and perform user seal check before every use
- Report malfunctions or concerns

Identifying Work Hazards
The respirators selected will be used as personal protection as part of an overall infection control plan which incorporates engineering and work practice controls.

This agency will follow the most current CDC and NYS Department of Health Guidance on appropriate infection control practices.

Routine infection control and isolation practices for typical work situations are well known and tend to remain consistent over time. However, during an outbreak of a new infectious illness or pandemic, infection control guidance may change as the situation unfolds, based on available epidemiological data. In these situations, it will be the responsibility of the respiratory protection program manager to keep current with CDC/NYSDOH recommendation. The program will be adjusted and employees will be kept informed as changes occur.

Respirator Selection
Only respirators approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) will be selected and used. In making the determination of which respirators to select, the RPA will consider the type of settings and job activities employees will perform, the capabilities and limitations of the respirator, and duration of respirator use.

Respirators currently approved for use are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Work Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alpha Pro Tech</td>
<td>N-95 Particulate Respirator</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M</td>
<td>N-95 Particulate Respirator</td>
<td>-</td>
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Medical Evaluation
Persons assigned to tasks that require respiratory protection must be physically able to perform the tasks while wearing a respirator. Gurwin Jewish Nursing & Rehabilitation Center will provide a medical evaluation to determine the employee’s ability to use a respirator, before the employee is fit tested or required to use the respiratory in the workplace. A physician or other licensed health care professional (PLHCP) will perform the medical evaluations using the OSHA mandatory medical questionnaire (see Appendix A) and/or performing an initial medical examination that obtains the same information as the medical questionnaire.
A follow-up medical examination will be provided for any employee who gives a positive response to any question among questions 1 through 8 in Section 2, part A or whose initial medical examination, Gurwin Jewish Nursing & Rehabilitation Center shall be provided a written recommendation regarding the employee’s ability to use a respirator and any restrictions indicated.

All medical questionnaires and examination shall be administered in a confidential manner during the employee’s normal working hours (or at a time and place convenient to the employee). The employee will also be provided the opportunity to discuss the questionnaire and/or results of the examination with the PLHCP.

**NOTE:** Be sure employees can read and understand English before using the medical questionnaire. If he/she is unable to do so, provide assistance as needed or schedule a medical exam.

{While not required under the standard, an agency/facility can set a schedule for periodic re-evaluation in the absence of any reported change in conditions. Some review annually, some every 2 or 3 years. The following conditions require re-evaluation regardless of the date of the last assessment}

Re-evaluation will be conducted under these circumstances:
- Employee reports physical symptoms that are related to the ability to use a respirator. (wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain, etc.) or
- It is identified that an employee is having a medical problem during respirator use or observations made during fit testing or
- The healthcare professional performing the evaluation determines an employee needs to be re-evaluated and the frequency of the evaluation or
- A change occurs in the workplace conditions that may result in an increased physiological burden on the employee or
- Employee facial size/shape/structure has changed significantly.

**Fit Testing**
Fit testing is conducted to determine how well the seal of a respirator “fits” on an individual’s face and that a good seal can be obtained. Respirators that do not seal do not offer adequate protection.

Employees required to wear a respirator shall be fit-tested using the *Qualitative* method.

Employees shall be fit tested a respirator of the same make, model, style and size as that of the respirator that will be used by the employee. If, based on the fit-test, it is determined that the employee needs a different style or size of tight-fitting face piece, employees shall be given a reasonable opportunity to select a different face piece, and be re-tested.
Fit testing will be conducted at least annually AND:
Prior to being allowed to wear any respirator or
• If the model of respirator available for use changes or
• If the employee changes weight by 10% or more or
• If the employee has any changes in facial structure or scarring.
Records of fit testing shall be maintained by the Respiratory Protection Administrator for at least 3 years.

Proper Respirator Use

General Use
Employees will use their respirators under the conditions specified by this program and in accordance with the training they receive on the use of the selected model(s). In addition, the respirator shall not be used in a manner for which it is not certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) or by its manufacturer.

All employees shall conduct user seal checks according to manufacturer recommendations each time they wear a respirator.

Employees who wear respirators cannot have facial hair that comes between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face, or that interferes with the respirator functions.

All employees shall leave a potentially contaminated work areas if the respirator is causing physical symptoms or the respirator no longer offers adequate protection (for example – strap breaks, becomes saturated with fluid, etc.)

Cleaning and Disinfecting
A disposable particulate respirator cannot be cleaned or disinfected. There is no specific time limit for how long an N95 respirator can be used.

If the medical condition requires only airborne isolation precautions (e.g., TB), discard the respirator:
• if it is soiled,
• if breathing becomes labored,
• if structural integrity is compromised.

If condition also requires contact and/or droplet precautions:
• The respirator must be discarded after a single use. All PPE should be removed and disposed of in a receptacle prior to or upon exiting a patient’s room and hand hygiene performed immediately.
• However, in times of shortage, consideration be given to extended use or reuse if special training is provided. This decision will be made by the Respiratory Protection Program
Administrator based on the available supply and current epidemiological data and will be communicated clearly to staff.

**Storage and Inspection**
Employees will inspect the respirator prior to use.
- Examine the disposable respirator to determine if it has structural integrity. Discard if there are nicks, abrasions, cuts, or creases in seal area or if the filter material is physically damaged or soiled.
- Check the respirator straps to be sure they are not cut or otherwise damage.
- Make sure the metal nose clip is in place and functions properly (if applicable).

Respirators will be stored in a clean, dry area away from direct sunlight and extreme heat. The Respiratory Protection Program Administrator will periodically inspect a representative sample of respirators in storage to ensure they are in usable condition.

**Respirator Training**
Employees shall be provided Respiratory Protection Training upon initial assignment to jobs where a respirator has been determined necessary and at least annually thereafter unless it is determined through a workplace re-evaluation that respiratory protection is no longer necessary. Program Administrator shall be responsible for ensuring completion of training.

Workers will be trained prior to the use of a respirator. Training will include:
- Why the respirator is necessary
- Identify hazards, potential exposure to these hazards, and health effects of hazards
- Other required PPE if needed
- Respirator fit, improper fit, usage, limitations, and capabilities
- Usage and storage
- Inspecting, donning, removal, seal check and trouble shooting
- Explaining respirator program (policies, procedures, OSHA standard, resources)

**Evaluating/Updating Program**
The Respiratory Protection Program Administrator will complete an annual evaluation of the Respiratory Protection Program.

- Evaluate any feedback information or surveys.
- Review any new hazards or changes in CDC/DOH recommendations that would affect respirator use.
- The Respiratory Program Administrator will make recommendations and implement any changes needed in the Respiratory Protection Program.
Documentation and Record-keeping

A written copy of this program can be found in designated binder.

The Respiratory Protection Program Administrator maintains the medical information for all employees covered under the respiratory program. The completed medical forms and documented medical recommendations are confidential.

All relevant medical information must be maintained for the duration of the employment of the individual plus thirty years.