This information applies to the voluntary use of respirators, particularly filtering face piece respirators (i.e., N95), at the University of Arizona. Respirators protect against airborne hazards when properly selected and used. Respirator use, including medical clearance, fit testing and training, is regulated by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134).

1. Voluntary use of respirators as a means of protection against COVID-19 for workers not at high risk for exposure is not authorized at the University of Arizona until further notice.
   1.1. Respiratory protection is in critically short-supply and filtering face piece respirators, including N95, must be preserved for healthcare and other workers at high risk for exposure to the novel coronavirus.
   1.2. There is a growing body of evidence that when everyone wears a face covering the probability of transmitting and contracting COVID-19 is significantly reduced. Every person at the University of Arizona should be wearing a face covering in accordance with the Administrative Directive, which will help to mitigate the risk of COVID-19.
   1.3. Filtering face piece respirators are designed for one-time use and, unlike cloth face coverings, cannot be easily and effectively cleaned. Face coverings are the right choice for members of our community – we need to preserve respirators like N95 masks for health care workers, researchers studying the novel coronavirus, and other workers at high risk for exposure.

2. Other voluntary use, only of filtering face piece (i.e., N95) respirators, is permitted at the University of Arizona, provided users do the following:
   2.1. A Hazard Assessment is required. Voluntary use is only allowed if a hazard assessment is first completed by Research Laboratory & Safety Services (Research labs/workers) or Risk Management Services (all other workers). Voluntary use is only allowed if the hazard assessment demonstrates exposure to substances remains below the applicable OSHA permissible exposure limit(s) (PEL), meaning a respirator is not required to keep exposures below the regulatory limit. The hazard assessment will include discussion of the hierarchy of controls to ensure hazard elimination, substitution, engineering and administrative controls are considered before introducing respiratory protection.
   2.2. You must inform your supervisor that you elect to voluntarily use a respirator. Your employer is not obligated to purchase respiratory protection for voluntary use.
   2.3. You must review, sign and follow the guidance in the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard Appendix D (next page). Be aware that respirators can create additional hazards for you if not used correctly and dependent upon your own health status. For example, respirators may pose harm to those with existing respiratory conditions. You can avoid these hazards if you know how to use your respirator properly and how to keep it clean using the steps specified in Appendix D (see next page). Note, you will not be enrolled into the University of Arizona Respiratory Protection Program (RPP), which includes medical clearance and fit testing, for voluntary filtering face piece respirator use.
   2.4. The filtering face piece respirator you purchase for voluntary use should not have an exhalation valve as this is not suitable for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.
   2.5. Do not wear your respirator into:
      2.5.1. Atmospheres containing hazards that your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter particles such as an N95 will not protect you against solvent vapor or oxygen deficiency.
      2.5.2. Situations where your supervisor requires the use of a respirator and use is not voluntary, since additional requirements of the OSHA respiratory protection regulations must be met.
Appendix D to Sec. 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 respirator’s 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.

By signing this form, I verify that I have read and understand the information provided and will provide a copy of this signed form to my supervisor.

Signature & Date

Updated: 8/12/2020