

Use of N95 Respirators

Purpose: To define the use of N95 respirators by research personnel with job responsibilities that OSHA considers “high risk” or “very high risk.”

Scope: Applicable researchers in buildings and public areas of the UTHSC Memphis Campus.

Applicability: Researchers wearing N95 respirators on the UTHSC Memphis campus until notified otherwise.

Procedure:

1. Researchers on UTHSC Memphis campus with job responsibilities that OSHA considers “high risk” or “very high risk” must wear an N95 respirator whenever there is the potential for close contact [e.g. within 6 feet (2 meters)] with another individual. This N95 must be a model suitable for patient care and NOT equipped with an unfiltered exhalation valve.
 - a) Very High Risk: Exposure to COVID-19 individuals during procedures that generate droplets or aerosols (e.g. healthcare professionals, lab and mortuary staff).
 - b) High Risk: Exposure to COVID-19 individuals without generating aerosols (e.g. healthcare support, medical transport).
2. Prior to wearing an N95 respirator on campus employees must receive medical approval to wear a respirator from UTHSC Occupational Health and complete N95 respirator training.
 - a) Medical Approval: Complete the [Medical Evaluation Questionnaire for Respirator Users](#) and email to eoht@uthsc.edu for review. The Occupational Health Coordinator will contact notify you with your approval or to schedule a follow-up evaluation. If the individual has previously received medical approval from UTHSC Occupational Health this does not need to be repeated unless the employee’s health status has changed in a manner that may affect their ability to wear a respirator.
 - b) N95 training: Available on UTHSC Blackboard. Use the search term “N95 Respirator” to locate the course and self-enroll. Employees that have completed N95 training within the last 12 months do not need to repeat this training until the 12-month period expires.

University of Tennessee Health Science Center
Research Safety Affairs Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
COVID-19 SOP03 – Use of N95 Respirators

Effective 4/1/2020

3. Don a new N95 respirator according to the instructions provided in the Blackboard training. Perform a user seal check after donning the respirator. If the N95 respirator has been previously used, put on gloves before handling the respirator. Don the respirator according to the instructions provided in the Blackboard training. Remove and discard the gloves and perform hand hygiene. Avoid touching the N95 respirator after you have put it on.
4. After use, remove the N95 respirators according to the following procedure:
 - a) Remove and discard gloves used during research work and wash hands.
 - b) Don clean gloves prior to removing your respirator. Remove the N95 respirator by handling the straps only. Remove the lower strap from around the base of the head, followed by the top strap. Do not touch the inside of the respirator.
 - c) While holding the respirator by the straps only, place the respirator in a paper bag labeled with your name. The purpose of the paper bag is to contain the respirator while allowing it to dry out and to maintain the shape of the respirator. Do not store your N95 in a sealable plastic bag.
 - d) Remove your gloves and wash hands.
5. N95 respirators must be discarded if they become contaminated with human blood or body fluids, lose their shape and no longer provide a tight seal with the face or have become saturated with exhalation moisture. Used respirators should be discarded in the conventional trash (i.e. they do not have to be discarded as red bag waste.)