

Optimizing Your Supply of N95 and Filtering Facepiece Respirators

Supplies of N95 Respirators Are Limited

Supplies of N95 respirators are limited due to increased demand and decreased availability of these products. For the current situation surrounding the COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) outbreaks, Concentra® recommends the practices established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the National Health Institute on Safety and Health (NIOSH) to conserve N95 respirator and other filtering facepiece respirator supplies for employers utilizing Concentra for respirator fit testing.

Fit Testing Filtering Facepiece Respirators

Employers should continue to follow their respiratory protection plans for respirator medical evaluation, respirator training, and respirator fit testing as directed by 29 CFR 1910.134. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to supply employees with NIOSH-certified respirators suitable for the environmental exposure and subject to respirator fit test annually. Employees presenting for respirator fit testing at Concentra medical centers must bring in their own NIOSH-certified respirator supplied by the employer, as required by the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard. It is recommended the employer supply optional styles and sizes if the employee is new to respirator use.

Optimization of N95 and Other Filtering Facepiece Respirators

1. Allow limited reuse.

Consider a protocol for employees on limited reuse, to include keeping and storing the N95 respirator used for qualitative fit testing.

Filtering facepiece respirators that have been quantitatively fit tested cannot be reused, as a hole must be punctured in the mask to perform quantitative testing.

Consider implementing CDC practices allowing limited reuse of N95 respirators in health care settings: [CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-supply-strategies.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-supply-strategies.html)

2. Use alternatives to N95 respirators.

For example, other classes of respirators N, R, P 95,99,100.

3. In times of shortage, consider the use of N95 respirators and other filtering facepiece respirators beyond the manufacturer-designated shelf life.