

**Environmental Health and Safety’s (EHS) Guidance for Voluntary Use of an N-95 Respirator:**

This guidance document provides a summary of the requirements of NAU’s Respiratory Protection Program that an employee and their supervisor must follow to allow employees to voluntarily wear an N-95 respirator in the workplace.

**Terms of Voluntary Use:**

N-95 respirators are covered by OSHA’s Respiratory Protection Standard. As such, voluntary use of N95’s requires an employer to assess potential respiratory hazards to rule out the need for required use under the standard. Contact EHS ([nauehs@nau.edu](mailto:nauehs@nau.edu)) to initiate this process. If respiratory protection is not required by EHS, an employee may request to voluntarily wear a disposable, N95 respirator. Voluntary use of an N95 respirator does not require enrollment in the University’s Respiratory Protection Program. However, individuals requesting to use a N95 respirator must acknowledge their decision to voluntarily use an N95 respirator and their understanding of the requirements associated with voluntary use.

**Voluntary N95 Respiratory Use Requirements:**

**Supervisors** in areas where voluntary N95 respirator use is requested and is to occur must:

* Clearly define the activity for which the voluntary N95 respirator use is requested and/or allowed.
* Contact EHS to perform a hazard assessment to verify the planned activity does not require the employee to be enrolled in NAU’s Respiratory Protection Program (nauehs@nau.edu).
* Ensure personnel choosing to voluntarily wear an N95 respirator receive a copy of this guidance, review Appendix D to OSHA’s 29 CRF 1910.134 (see below) and have completed and submitted EHS’s Voluntary N-95 Respirator Use Acknowledgement form (also attached).
* Maintain signed copies of the Voluntary N-95 Respirator Use Acknowledgment Form for all active voluntary N95 respirator use.

**Employees** **requesting and choosing to voluntarily use an N95 respirator must:**

* Inform their supervisor of their desire to voluntarily use an N95 respirator and the activity(s) they intend to wear it for. The supervisor will notify EHS who will verify that the planned activity(s) meets the criteria for voluntary use.
* Once EHS verifies voluntary use of an N95 respirator is appropriate for the intended activity(s), review OSHA’s Appendix D provided below.
* Complete the Voluntary N-95 Respirator Use Acknowledgement and submit to their supervisor.
* Procure an N95 respirator (the cost of purchasing a respirator is at the discretion of the department).
* Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions provided with the N95 respirator.
* Know the capabilities and limitations of the N95 respirator.
* Properly use, store, maintain, and care for the N95 respirator.
* Ensure the N95 respirator is worn appropriately and has a good fit in direct contact with their face. Facial hair may hinder obtaining a good fit.
* Must perform user seal checks prior to each use (positive and negative).
* Recognize medical signs and symptoms that may limit or prevent the effective use of respirators and what to do if experiencing signs and symptoms.
* The respirator should be stored in a breathable storage container (*e.g*., paper bag) for at least five calendar days between use and has been kept away from water or moisture.
* Notify the supervisor if experiencing adverse health effects or if difficulties develop while wearing the respirator.

**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.



**Health and Safety Voluntary N-95 Respirator Use Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge that I intend to voluntarily use an N95 respirator for activities at Northern Arizona University in accordance with the information and guidelines outlined in EHS’s Guidance for Voluntary Use of an N-95 Respirator. I have reviewed and understand Appendix D to Sec. 1910.134 (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard**.** I will ensure that my voluntary use of a N95 respirator complies with all voluntary respirator use requirements and that my supervisor has been advised of my voluntarily use of a N95 respirator. I will ensure that if I perform activities which require respiratory protection and subsequent participation in the University’s Respiratory Protection Program, I will notify my supervisor.

Name NAU ID

Supervisor Department

Reason for voluntary respirator use (describe activities to be conducted and work location):

Employee Signature Date

Note: Completed Voluntarily N-95 Respirator Use Acknowledgement forms must be submitted to your supervisor.