



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
P.O. Box 41100 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1100

December 23, 2020

TO: DOC Work Release Staff

FROM: Danielle Armbruster, Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: N95 Mandate for Staff

As the number of positive cases of COVID-19 amongst staff and our population within Corrections' facilities continues to rise, the Department has identified and implemented the highest level of protection for our staff and residents in our care.

Along with testing of all staff and residents in Work Release (WR) facilities for COVID-19, we are now also requiring expanded N95 fit testing for all staff performing custody and case management duties. Due to this current health crisis and the upcoming testing of all WR residents for COVID-19, providing greater staff protection is crucial. The N95 is an essential safety tool for working with COVID-19 positive individuals. Your safety matters and we will provide the resources, training and tools to keep you and your family safe.

In order to wear an N95 mask, you must be fit tested and wear the Department supplied and approved N95 mask. Before initial fit testing, a person's ability to wear a respirator must be medically evaluated, at no cost to the wearer, by a licensed health care practitioner (LHCP). The medical evaluation and respirator clearance process includes:

- Wearer completes the [DOC 03-219 Respirator Medical Evaluation Questionnaire \(MS Word\)](#) and submits it to [Occupational Health and Wellness Unit \(email\)](#).
- For employees/contract staff, [occupational nurse consultants \(ONC\)](#) will review the questionnaire and either clear the employee to wear the respirator, or refer the employee/contract staff to further medical evaluation. The ONCs document their review on the [DOC 03-314 Licensed Health Care Provider \(LHCP\) Information and Response Sheet \(MS Word\)](#).

If the employee/contract staff is cleared by the ONC, they will be fitted by DOC trained fit testers at their workplace with a respirator. This will be coordinated through the Reentry/CCD Unified Command and a trainer will coordinate a time to come to your facility to accommodate this mandate. If you are currently fit-tested for our gas masks or other respirators, the medical requirements identified in [890.090 Respirator Program](#) are satisfied.

If you are medically exempt from this requirement due to a LHCP recommendation based

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on your medical history; or you are exhibiting any signs or symptoms that preclude your ability to safely wear an N95 mask, as determined by observation during fit testing or in routine daily tasks, it will be your responsibility to contact your local HR for next steps and/or accommodation. As this is a requirement supported by [WAC 296.842](#) it allows the Department to protect employees from respiratory hazards. L&I defines a virus as a [Toxic Substance](#), which upholds the necessity to wear protective N95 masks for your safety.

Prior to being fit-tested, please review the [DOC Proper Use of PPE](#) video, which explains the process for donning and doffing the N95 and other PPE. Even if you already completed this training, it will be helpful to review it again.

Thank you for your continued cooperation as we work together to keep our employees, residents and the community better protected against the spread of COVID-19.

DA:cm

cc: Rob Herzog, Assistant Secretary of Prisons Division
Ton Johnson, Washington Federation of State Employees
Statewide Family Council