



COVID-19 RESPONSE

CITY OF PORTLAND
EMERGENCY COORDINATION CENTER



Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the Workplace

Updated: April 6, 2020 Issued By: Emergency Coordination Center

Oregon OSHA and the CDC have provided guidance on the use of PPE in the workplace. There is a critical shortage of PPE at present; conservation of N95 respirators is important.

Respiratory Protection

Oregon OSHA guidance recommends reducing use of N95 respirators when it is not necessary and deferring to respiratory protection options already available that are equally or more protective than N95s (i.e. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)-approved, non-disposable, elastomeric respirators or powered, air-purifying respirators).

For work locations where N95 respirators are already in use, Oregon OSHA notes “when these alternatives are not available, or where their use creates additional safety or health hazards, employers may consider the extended use or reuse of N95s or use N95s that were approved but have since passed the manufacturer’s recommended shelf life” while the current public health crisis continues. Oregon OSHA states “N95 (filtering facepiece respirators) should not be used as a means to allow close contact (less than six feet of social distancing).” Oregon OSHA expects workplaces to comply with the governor’s Executive Order No. 20-12 to maintain social distancing.

The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain; however, this is not considered PPE.

Critical Project and Job Task Evaluation

Oregon OSHA also recommends assessment of projects and job tasks to determine criticality. Conduct and document an evaluation to determine:

- Is this project or job task critical at this time?
- Reassess work practices to determine if it is safe to conduct job tasks at a 6-foot distance.
- Reassess engineering and administrative controls to determine if there are other options to create physical distance.
- If there are no options for physical distancing, administrative controls, or engineering controls, and this is a critical task conduct a job hazard analysis or PPE assessment for job tasks.

Resources:

- Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration – [Enforcement Guidance for Respiratory Protection and the N95 Shortage Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)
- Oregon OSHA – [Workplace Guidance for COVID-19](#)
- CDC Healthcare PPE Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

- CDC Conservation & Optimization Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/>
- CDC Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>