

October 21, 2020

## N95 Respirator Rotation Plan

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our supply chain. However, unlike at the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen some increases in the availability of N95 respirators. Because of the increased availability of N95 respirators, increase of PAPRs/CAPRs and the deployment of half face reusable respirators, we are moving from “crisis capacity” to “contingency capacity”. This means that, as supplies of N95 respirators increase, we are able to reduce the number of times that N95 respirators need to be re-used.



At Allina Health, we continually consider strategies to ensure the **safety** of our patients and employees — it’s our top priority. As a system, we follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Minnesota Department of Health personal protection equipment (PPE) guidance.

### Know Why & Comply:

While N95 respirators were designed to be a single use respirator, CDC crisis capacity standards allows for reuse up to 5 times. As we start to receive improved supplies of N95s we are able to reduce the number of times an N95 respirator needs to be used. This approach supports **employee safety** and N95 conservation efforts.

The Allina Health PPE Scarcity Task force endorses reducing the number of times an N95 respirator is reused. Beginning Wednesday October 28, individuals in the N95 respirator program should **continue** the five-day respirator rotation process for N95 respirators and **reduce** the number of times the respirator is reused from **5** uses to **3** uses.

This recommendation is contingent upon continued strict adherence to appropriate uninterrupted use/careful reuse of respirators and strict adherence to hand hygiene procedures. By waiting 5 days between uses, any potentially infectious virus present on an N95 respirator that may have been contaminated during use will have degraded.

At this time, N95 supplies do not allow for additional staff to move from reusable respirators to N95s. Reusable respirators (including half face respirators, PAPRs and CAPRs) will continue to be a part of our strategy to provide respiratory protection to all staff caring for COVID-19 positive patients and PUIs.

### Updated N95 Respirator Rotation Plan:

This plan only applies to staff currently wearing N95 respirators\*. Staff who are currently using half face respirators will continue to use that respirator. Staff will use 1 N95 respirator per working day, then store the respirator for a minimum of **5 calendar days** before reusing. Each respirator should be used for a total of **3** shifts. **You do not need 5 respirators in a rotation if you do not work 5 days in a row.** See example below, and reference the [Reuse and Uninterrupted Use Procedure](#) for doffing and reuse guidance.

\*Employees in the N95 rotation plan in Allina EMS and at River Falls Hospital should follow unit specific instructions for N95 rotation and collection.



## WORK DAY 1

Follow the uninterrupted use guidelines with your current N95. Remember that a full face shield must be worn when using an N95 respirator to protect it from contamination.

At the end of the day, place the N95 respirator into the storage bag/container labeled with your name, the date, and a tally mark.



## WORK DAY 2

**If five calendar days have passed since your prior shift, you may now reuse the respirator that has been stored for five days.**

Follow the uninterrupted use and careful reuse guidelines.

At the end of the day, place the N95 respirator into the storage bag/container, add a second tally mark to the storage bag/container, and add today's date.

**If you do not have a respirator that has been stored for five days, you need a new N95 respirator and bag or container.**

Follow the uninterrupted use and careful reuse guidelines.

At the end of day, place the respirator into the storage bag/container labeled with your name, the date, and a tally mark.



## WORK DAY 3

**If five calendar days have passed since your prior shift, you may now reuse the respirator that has been stored for five days.**

Follow the uninterrupted use and careful reuse guidelines.

At the end of the third day of use (noted by taking a respirator from a bag or container that has two tally marks) discard the respirator.

Please work with your local unit manager/supervisor to facilitate the distribution and storage of the respirators.