





A wide-spread outbreak of infectious respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 may result to a depleted supply of N95 respirators. As such, the CDC created these guidelines on the Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators in Healthcare Settings:

-  Extended use is preferred over Reuse as this involve less touching of the respirator.
-  Implement practices allowing extended use and/or limited reuse of N95 respirators, when acceptable;
-  Respirator must maintain its fit and function. **Experience shows that respirator within their design specifications can function for 8 hours of continuous or intermittent use.
-  Prioritize the use of N95 respirators for those personnel at the highest risk of contracting or experiencing complications of infection.




Facility policies vary on the Extended use or Reuse of respirator. The following measures are recommended by CDC to reduce contact transmission after donning for an extended period and reuse of respirator.

EXTENDED USE OF RESPIRATOR

- 1 Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures.
- 2 Discard N95 respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- 3 Discard N95 respirators following close contact with, or exit from, the care area of any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.
- 4 Consider use of a cleanable face shield (preferred) over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients) to reduce surface contamination.
- 5 Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator.

REUSE OF RESPIRATOR

Follow recommendations on extended use and add additional steps on reuse of respirator to reduce contact contamination.

-  Hang used respirators in a designated storage area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so that they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified. **Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
-  Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, perform hand hygiene as described above.
-  Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal.

***If no manufacturers guidance is available, CDC suggests limiting the number of reuses to no more than **five** uses per device to ensure an adequate safety margin.*