Guidance for reuse and extended use of N95 respirators

Purpose:

- To prevent a shortage or exhaust our supply of facemasks, respirators and eye protection.
- To ensure that our staff have access to the necessary supplies to perform patient care safely.

Definitions:

- **Extended use** refers to the practice of wearing the same N95 respirator for repeated encounters with several patients, without removing the respirator between the encounters.
  - Eye protection may be left in place with the N95 respirator for extended use.
  - When not using a full-face shield, staff should wear ear loop mask over N95 during patient encounters to minimize surface contamination.
- **Reuse** refers to the practice of using the same N95 respirator for multiple encounters with patients but removing it (‘doffing’) periodically. The respirator is stored in between encounters and reused.

Applicability:

These guidelines apply to all health care personnel (HCPs) who need to wear respiratory protection during patient care or as a requirement of their work responsibilities (during aerosolizing procedures for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 patients and all airway procedures).

General Guidelines:

- Re-use guidelines apply only to those who are fit-tested for a N95 respirator.
- Extended use or re-use is not recommended if the N95 respirator has reached the end of its use through being physically damaged or visibly soiled.
- **N95 respirators can be reused following the extended use and re-use guidelines above for an entire shift.**

Extended Use

When not using a full-face shield, staff should wear ear loop mask over N95 during patient encounters to minimize surface contamination.

A N95 can be worn for several hours if not wet, distorted, or contaminated while delivering patient care.

Re-use

After doffing N95 respirator:

- Perform hand hygiene.
- Don clean gloves.
- Inspect N95 respirator for signs of damage or contamination, discard if present.
- Keep used respirators in a clean, breathable container (e.g. paper bag) **between uses**.
- Store respirators so that they do not touch each other.
Label the N95 respirator and paper storage bag with the user’s health system user ID and designated drop-off/pickup location* before re-using to prevent reuse by another individual.

When donning re-used respirator:

- Always perform hand hygiene and use clean 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.
- Perform hand hygiene after removing gloves.
- Avoid touching the mask. Anytime one touches the N95, it is necessary to perform hand hygiene as described above.

Discard N95 respirator (do not reuse) if:

- Contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- The straps are stretched so they no longer provide enough tension for the respirator to seal to the face.
- If the nose piece or other fit enhancements are broken.
- The respirator is obviously damaged or becomes hard to breathe through.

N95 respirators can be reused following the extended use and re-use guidelines above for an entire shift. Both with new and reprocessed respirators, all HCP are responsible for ensuring the proper fit and integrity of each respirator upon use.

Healthcare Personnel (HCP) Steps for reprocessing:

Once shift is complete:

- Ensure N95 is labeled with user’s health system user ID, and designated drop-off/pickup location* (e.g. J Doe3 BH64)
- Place labeled N95 respirator in your brown paper bag.
  - Place bagged N95 respirator in DIRTY collection tote located in designated areas*
  - Used N95s will be collected daily.
- Decontaminated N95 respirators will be distributed to units daily.
  - N95s will be delivered to designated areas* in CLEAN totes and paper bags indicating owner and designated drop-off/pickup location.
- Float Staff – Designate location as “Float” and your CLEAN pickup location will be BH64.
- Respiratory Therapy – Designate location as “RT” and your CLEAN pickup location will be BHB301.

*Masks will be delivered and collected from designated areas: ED, BHOR, BH54, BH61, BH64, CAOR, CA5, CVOR, GI/Endo, Indian Creek

Both with new and reprocessed respirators, all HCP are responsible for ensuring the proper fit and integrity of each respirator upon use.