

Respiratory Protection Program		
For Policy Office Use Only		
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Scope/Impact: Applies to CHEO staff (employees, medical staff, learners, contract workers)		
Keywords: N95, PPE, airborne infectious particulates, fit test, respirators		

1. Purpose

This policy applies to all CHEO employees, medical staff, learners, contract workers (staff), who may be exposed to airborne infectious agents and/or respiratory diseases and other situations requiring the use of a N95 respirator. N95 respirator fit testing is required for all staff who meet the fit testing requirements laid out in ([Appendix A](#)) (subject to change in exceptional circumstances).

To ensure staff are protected and educated on the requirements for using a N95 respirator, and in special circumstances, the half/full face respirators (refer to [Code Brown Policy](#)). Occupational Safety, in collaboration with key stakeholders, will implement a program that provides guidelines for respirator fit testing, mandatory training, respirator selection, proper storage, use and care of all types of respirators.

2. Policy

- 2.1. CHEO shall implement a Respiratory Protection Program that shall abide by the *CAN/CSA Z94.4-18 Selection, Use, and Care of Respirators*.
- 2.2. CHEO N95 respirator fit testing requirements will align with current Infection Control practices laid out by CHEO’s Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team.
- 2.3. Mandatory N95 fit testing will be based on the risk criteria laid out in [Appendix A](#).
- 2.4. All staff identified as needing fit testing will complete fit testing at a minimum of every 2 years.
- 2.5. All staff (new hires) fit tested at other health care facilities are to provide documentation of N95 fit testing to Occupational Safety. Staff may need to be refitted if their respirator size is not available in CHEO inventory.
- 2.6. Staff required to wear an N95 respirator while providing care must not have facial hair that will impede the seal of the N95 respirator, in accordance with CSA Standard Z94.4-11. Examples of acceptable and unacceptable facial hair are included in [Appendix B](#).
- 2.7. Any requests for formal exemptions from fit testing for religious, medical, or personal reasons must be documented and reported to Occupational Health and Wellness using [Appendix C](#).
- 2.8. In areas where the use of N95 respirator protection is required, current/new staff and their managers/supervisors must ensure that they have received appropriate fit testing and training by the designated fit testers.

- 2.9. A fit tested, seal-checked N95 respirator is required when performing or when present for aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMPs) on patients under droplet contact precautions.
- 2.10. Staff are required to perform a [Point of Care Risk Assessment \(PCRA\)](#), prior to interacting with a patient.
- 2.11. Staff responsible for responding to chemical spills, as outlined in the [Code Brown policy](#), will require additional training and fit testing on half and/or full-face respirators every 2 years.
- 2.12. Half and full-face respirator fit testing is performed solely by Occupational Safety, not by the unit level fit tester.
- 2.13. Staff who do not meet the N95 fit testing requirements but wish to be fit tested for other safety/medical reasons or concerns, please contact Occupational Safety via occsafety@cheo.on.ca to receive the opt-in form for N95 fit testing.
- 2.14. Staff in occupations that are not identified as needing mandatory fit testing, but who may on occasion have contact with patient(s) on suspect or confirmed airborne infections, should opt-in for fit testing.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1. Directors/Managers/Supervisors:
 - 3.1.1. Maintain and adhere to all aspects of the respirator protection program.
 - 3.1.2. Ensure recommendations of IPAC are adhered to by staff.
 - 3.1.3. Ensure staff requiring fit testing receive N95 fit testing training before using a respirator and every 2 years. Follow-up with non-compliance.
 - 3.1.4. Ensure suitable staffing resources and coverage are available (as needed) to allow staff and fit testers to obtain/perform their N95 respirator fit testing every 2 years.
 - 3.1.5. Identify staff in their area (as needed) to be trained as unit level fit tester(s) to provide fit testing to staff in their department.
 - 3.1.6. Ensure fit testing/training is completed prior to assigning a staff to any task or area that may require the use of a N95 respirator.
 - 3.1.7. Ensure awareness of the information and resources (on CHEOnet) available on respirator use, donning and doffing procedures, fit testing, PCRA. Share information with team members as required.
 - 3.1.8. Inform Occupational Safety of any staff concerns or changes in the workplace that would impact the Respiratory Protection Program requirements.
 - 3.1.9. Review staff/unit/department/area requirements for N95 respirator needs annually, based on the requirements outlined in Appendix A and notify Occupational Safety of any changes.
 - 3.1.10. Ensure the continual availability of all respirators, models, and sizes staff may require.
 - 3.1.11. Identify and update team on the most probable infectious hazards in each area and the respirator protective equipment required for protection of all staff working in these areas.
 - 3.1.12. Ensure opt-in forms for N95 fit testing are completed (when applicable).
- 3.2. Occupational Safety:
 - 3.2.1. Develop and administer the Respiratory Protection Program.
 - 3.2.2. Ensure N95 fit testing “Train the Trainer” sessions, follow ups and refresher training are conducted at least annually for new and current trainers along with providing them with updated fit testing documents.
 - 3.2.3. Maintain all aspects of the program and related resources annually to ensure compliance with applicable legislation and current CSA standards (training, policy, procedures, etc.).
 - 3.2.4. Document completed fit testing using the designated electronic health systems database (Workday).
 - 3.2.5. Identify and ensure there are adequate unit level fit testers to provide fit testing and offer training as needed throughout departments.

- 3.2.6. Ensure an adequate selection of N95 respirators are available within the occupational safety office and trial new respirators as necessary.
 - 3.2.7. Provide fit testing to staff to supplement the unit level fit testing.
 - 3.2.8. Conduct quantitative fit testing with the PortaCount machine for all employees that have difficulty completing qualitative fit testing.
 - 3.2.9. Collaborate with Occupational Health and Wellness (OHW) regarding medical/religious/other fit testing exemptions.
 - 3.2.10. Collaborate with emergency management and key stakeholders regarding half/full face respirator training.
 - 3.2.11. Review N95 respirator fit testing opt-in request emails and send off the Microsoft form to be completed by the staff/manager; review completed forms and add staff N95 certification to Workday.
- 3.3. Occupational Health and Wellness (OHW):
- 3.3.1. Follow-up with staff who have identified potential health concerns that could compromise the safety of their participating in respirator fit testing or wearing a respirator while at work.
 - 3.3.2. Follow-up with staff formally requesting a respirator fit testing exemption to ensure supporting documentation is submitted, as required.
 - 3.3.3. Follow-up with staff referred to OHW by Occupational Safety due to concerns on the N95 Respirator Fit Test Health Questionnaire in [Appendix D](#).
 - 3.3.4. Inform the employee and their director/manager/supervisor of inability to wear N95 respirator after medical follow-up or exemption review.
 - 3.3.5. Inform Occupational Safety of the outcome of the follow-up in order to document the exemption in Workday.
- 3.4. Infection Prevention and Control Director/Manager/Practitioners:
- 3.4.1. Identify and communicate any existing or new potential airborne infectious illness hazards to relevant stakeholders and recommend appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
 - 3.4.2. Act as subject matter experts for education regarding infection control precautions (including respiratory protection requirements).
 - 3.4.3. Notify staff of the implementation of control measures as directed by Ottawa Public Health, the Ministry of Health, and/or Health Canada in extenuating circumstances (such as declared infectious disease outbreaks and/or pandemic situations).
- 3.5. Employees, medical staff, learners, contract workers (staff):
- 3.5.1. Participate in the respiratory protection training and fit testing program, if required.
 - 3.5.2. Maintain their N95 respirator fit test certification every 2 years (or sooner if there are significant changes impacting respirator fit such as a change in body weight or face >10% weight gain/loss, dental or facial surgery) by booking a fit test with their unit level fit testers first (if available) prior to booking with Occupational Safety.
 - 3.5.3. Contact Occupational Safety directly for quantitative fit testing on the PortaCount machine.
 - 3.5.4. Only wear successfully fit tested respirators provided by CHEO.
 - 3.5.5. Perform a [Point of Care Risk Assessment \(PCRA\)](#) to determine additional PPE needed for each patient interaction.
 - 3.5.6. Participate in all components of the Respiratory Protection Program including completing the N95 Respirator Fit Testing Health Questionnaire [Appendix D](#) prior to fit testing. Work cooperatively with OHW if there are health concerns that impede the ability to safely complete fit testing or wear a respirator.
 - 3.5.7. Maintain a clean-shaven face if their occupation requires an N95 respirator.
 - 3.5.8. Inspect and perform a user seal-check every time a respirator is donned.
 - 3.5.9. Report any concerns about the respirator supply (e.g. damage, inadequate supply) through the Safety Reporting System (SRS) *Workplace Incident/Hazard* form and bring it to the attention of their manager/director/supervisor.
 - 3.5.10. Complete the *N95 Respirator Exemption Form* if unable to complete fit testing for medical or religious reasons ([Appendix C](#)). Submit the completed form to Occupational Health and Wellness for review and follow-up.
 - 3.5.11. Be aware of the ability to Opt-in to N95 fit testing, if determined.

- 3.6. N95 Unit Level Fit Testers:
 - 3.6.1. Review the N95 respirator fit testing decision tree to ensure appropriate staff are fit tested and they meet the mandatory requirements in [Appendix A](#).
 - 3.6.2. Conduct qualitative fit testing only after attending the required training, and once confident in the knowledge and ability to conduct fit testing. Any time a fit tester is unsure of how to approach a particular fit testing scenario, or they need a refresher, they must contact Occupational Safety.
 - 3.6.3. Participate in education and training provided by Occupational Safety on all aspects of performing a qualitative fit test and keep up to date with any change in practices.
 - 3.6.4. Ensure qualitative fit testing equipment is clean and kept complete. Follow-up with Occupational Safety when there are concerns or new equipment is needed.
 - 3.6.5. Provide qualitative respirator fit testing to staff as needed on their individual units. ([Appendix E](#))
 - 3.6.6. Provide training and review sessions for staff, which include information regarding the use, care, and storage/disposal of respirators as laid out in [Appendix F](#) and [Appendix G](#).
 - 3.6.7. Document completed fit testing using the designated electronic health system database (Workday).
 - 3.6.8. Direct staff to email occupational safety regarding any N95 opt-in requests.
- 3.7. Procurement/Materials Management/Supply Workers:
 - 3.7.1. Ensure an adequate supply of N95 respirators is available to meet staff needs throughout CHEO ([Appendix H](#)).
 - 3.7.2. Notify Occupational Safety of any back order or supply issues, in a timely matter.
 - 3.7.3. Ensure adequate N95 respirator supplies are stocked in each required unit/department/area and replenished as needed.
- 3.8. Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC):
 - 3.8.1. Participate in an annual review of the Respiratory Protection Program.
 - 3.8.2. Conduct JHSC inspections, ensuring unit/department/areas have PPE available and accessible to staff.
- 3.9. Preceptors/Instructors of Learners:
 - 3.9.1. Non-CHEO employees that have learner placements at CHEO, must be fit tested through their educational institutions/other prior to their placement at CHEO. Their respirator type must match the supply available at CHEO (only CHEO supplied respirators may be used).
 - 3.9.2. Preceptors are required to ensure learners are aware of hospital policies and procedures relating to N95 respirator testing program and appropriate donning and doffing procedures.
 - 3.9.3. Preceptors must communicate the respirator sizes available at CHEO to the educational institution.
- 3.10. Emergency Management:
 - 3.10.1. Identify staff who require half and full face N95 respirator training and fit testing as per the [Code Brown Policy](#).
 - 3.10.2. Review and update staff training requirements.

4. Steps to Implement

- 4.1 Identification of appropriate respirator for airborne infectious respiratory hazards:
 - 4.1.1 Occupational Safety in collaboration with Infection Prevention and Control leadership and the Director of Material Management shall determine a selection of appropriate N95 respirators based on assessment of infectious airborne organisms present in healthcare facilities and at CHEO.
 - 4.1.2 Occupational Safety in collaboration with procurement will maintain an up-to-date list of N95 respirator types and quantities available at CHEO.
 - 4.1.3 Review in-house respirator supply in comparison with requirements, as necessary.
- 4.2 Qualitative or Quantitative N95 Respirator Fit Testing:
 - 4.2.1 Staff member completes the N95 Respirator Fit Testing Health Questionnaire ([Appendix D](#)).

- 4.2.2 Qualified fit tester reviews the health questionnaire to determine whether it is safe to proceed with the fit test. If the fit tester determines it is not safe to proceed, or is unsure, the individual must be referred to OHW for further assessment.
 - 4.2.3 Qualified fit tester conducts testing to staff who are deemed mandatory and/or opt-in and in accordance with the N95 Respirator Fit Testing Decision Tree in [Appendix A](#).
 - 4.2.4 Provide background on N95 uses and rationale found in the respirator fit testing checklist ([Appendix G](#)).
 - 4.2.5 Demonstrate proper donning/doffing of the N95 respirator.
 - 4.2.6 Educate and demonstrate how to perform a user seal-check.
 - 4.2.7 Educate on the use, care, limitations, storage of respirators.
 - 4.2.8 Educate on where to obtain additional fit testing information.
 - 4.2.9 Provide staff/medical staff with a certification card ([Appendix I](#)) indicating their mask size. Document mask date and size in Workday.
- 4.3 Unsuccessful N95 Respirator Fit Testing:
- 4.3.1 N95 Fit tester shall:
 - 4.3.1.1 Determine factors other than poor fit that contributed to an unsuccessful fitting (e.g. user's health/ fatigue/time constraints).
 - 4.3.1.2 Retry minimally 15-20 minutes after first fit test, or on the next available day, with another model, or size of N95 respirator.
 - 4.3.1.3 If still not successful with any CHEO stock respirators, refer staff member to Occupational Safety for follow up.
 - 4.3.2 Occupational Safety:
 - 4.3.2.1 Assess staff and conduct additional fit testing to verify fit with different respirator(s) using the PortaCount quantitative fit testing machine.
 - 4.3.2.2 Notify director/manager/supervisor if employee has not been successfully fit tested on any available CHEO N95 respirators so that they will not be given assignments or put in situations that require an N95 respirator.
 - 4.3.2.3 Document the unsuccessful fitting in Workday.
 - 4.3.2.4 Review the need for a special order respirator for the staff to be fitted on (if applicable).
 - 4.3.3 Director/Manager/Supervisor
 - 4.3.3.1 Review their specific N95 fit testing compliance report from Workday and refer expired staff to complete fit testing as soon as possible.
 - 4.3.3.2 Accommodate staff as identified by Occupational Health and Wellness and/or Occupational Safety.
 - 4.3.3.3 Ensure Care Facilitator/Charge Nurse are aware of staff who do not have an up-to-date N95 respirator fit test certification to ensure staffing requirements and needs are met.
 - 4.3.3.4 Follow up with staff to ensure they follow and understand the safety precautions they must take if not fitted with an N95 respirator.
- 4.4 Program Evaluation and Record Keeping
- 4.4.1 Occupational Safety:
 - 4.4.1.1 Review the policy and training program for compliance with legislative standards on an annual basis in conjunction with JHSC.
 - 4.4.1.2 Maintain and update all supporting documents in the appendices within this policy.
 - 4.4.1.3 Maintain and review the Workday documentation process annually and collaborate with program superusers as needed with change recommendations.
 - 4.4.1.4 Track organizational compliance with N95 fit testing including fit testing opt-in request.
 - 4.4.1.5 Half and full-face respirator fit testing and record keeping is managed by Occupational Safety ([Appendix J](#), [K](#), [L](#)).

5. Cross-References

- 5.1. [IPAC Policies and Protocols](#) - Airborne Precautions Policy

- 5.2. [IPAC Policies and Protocols](#) - Aerosol-Generating Medical Procedures policy (*under review)
- 5.3. [IPAC Policies and Protocols](#) - Hand Hygiene, Policy # 350
- 5.4. [IPAC Policies and Protocols](#) - Droplet / Contact Precautions, Policy # IPAC 2-3
- 5.5. [IPAC Policies and Protocols](#) - Routine Practices, Policy # IPAC 1-1
- 5.6. [Point of Care Risk Assessment \(PCRA\)](#)
- 5.7. [IPAC Transmission Tables:](#)
 - Table 1: Transmission Characteristics and Empiric Precautions by Clinical Presentation
 - Table 2: Transmission Characteristics and Preventions by Specific Etiology
- 5.8. [Emergency Management](#) - Code Brown – Hazardous Materials Spill Response, Policy # 201
- 5.9. Tools and Policies - [Safety Data Sheets](#)
- 5.10. Occupational Safety - [Reporting and Investigation of Accidents/Incidents](#), Policy # 320
- 5.11. [Ottawa Public Health - Reporting of Communicable Diseases](#)

6. References

Citations

- Canadian Standards Association Z94.4-18 Selection, Use and Care of Respirators. 2023.
- National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Respirator Protection Program in Health Care Facilities, Administrator's Guide, CDC, April 2022.
- Government of Ontario. (2023). Respirator protection program. Retrieved from [4-9 Respirator protection program | Section 4: Personal protective equipment | ontario.ca](#)
- Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety. (2023). Personal protective equipment. Retrieved from [CCOHS: Respirators - Respirator Selection](#)

Legislation & Regulations

- Government of Ontario. (1990). Occupational Health and Safety Act, RSO 1990, c. O. 1, s. 25(1) (a – d), 25 (2) (a, d & h), 27 (1) (a, b), 27 (2) (a-c), 28 (1) (a-d), 28 (2) (a-c),
- Government of Ontario. O. Reg. 67/93 -for Health Care and Residential Facilities s. 8-10.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 [Appendix A](#) N95 Respirator Fit Testing Decision Tree
- 7.2 [Appendix B](#) Facial Hair Requirements for N95 Respirator Fit Testing
- 7.3 [Appendix C](#) N95 Respiratory Exemption Form
- 7.4 [Appendix D](#) N95 Respirator Fit Testing Health Questionnaire
- 7.5 [Appendix E](#) N95 – Respirator Protection Training Program Log
- 7.6 [Appendix F](#) Information Handout for N95 Respirator Fit Testing
- 7.7 [Appendix G](#) N95 Respirator Fit Testers Checklist
- 7.8 [Appendix H](#) N95 Respirator and Half/Full Face Types
- 7.9 [Appendix I](#) Occupational Safety N95 Certification Card
- 7.10 [Appendix J](#) Half and Full Face Respirator Checklist
- 7.11 [Appendix K](#) Half and Full-Face Respirator Fit Testing Health Questionnaire
- 7.12 [Appendix L](#) Information Handout for Half and Full Face Respirator Fit Testing

8. Definitions

- **Competent Person:** (as defined by Occupational Health and Safety Act): means a person who is: (i) qualified because of that person's knowledge, training and experience to do the assigned work in a manner that will ensure the health and safety of persons in the workplace, and (ii) knowledgeable about the provisions of the Act and regulations, that apply to the assigned work, and about potential or actual danger to health or safety associated with the assigned work (e.g. competent fit testers).
- **Fit testing:** The process which identifies the appropriate respirator for an individual through qualitative or quantitative fit testing methods.
- **Qualitative fit test (QLFT):** a pass/fail test method that relies on the subject's taste response to detect a challenge agent (Bitrex), to assess the adequacy of respirator fit. CHEO uses this method.

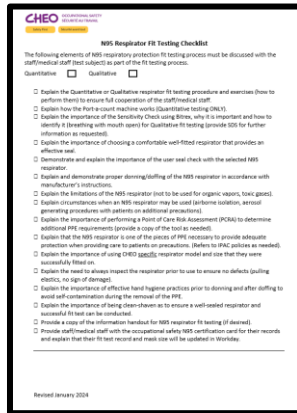
- **Quantitative fit test (QNFT):** a pass/fail test method that relies on an instrument to assess the adequacy of respirator fit. (Note: QNFT is used on a limited basis by Occupational safety at CHEO).
- **N95 Fit tester:** An employee trained at CHEO who is deemed competent to conduct fit testing.
- **N95 Respirator:** National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) certified respirators that are 95% efficient at filtering particulates 0.3 microns in size and are used to filter dust, mist, fibers, or infectious particulates. The N95 is available in different brands, models, and sizes.
- **User seal-check:** an action conducted by the N95 user to determine if the N95 is properly sealed to the face. This action must be done each time the respirator is donned (put on).

Version History:

Date	Type of revisions	List of revisions
Dec 4, 2023	Major Revisions	Responsibilities, created specific headings for specific groups outlining their roles and responsibilities
Sep 25, 2024	Major Revisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name changes of policy. • Updated all Appendices and included all handouts, questionnaire etc. (see appendices for completed list) used for training and testing. • Included information on half/full face testing, refer to code brown policy • Included change in process and responsibilities for documentation and procedures for individual responsible for these areas. • Updated language and added further details and clarification on the process and responsibilities for individual groups. • Included a clear outline of who requires fit testing (decision tree) • Added ability to opt in to fit testing for non-mandatory groups

Appendix G N95 Respirator Fit Testing Checklist

To review or download the full document, [Click Here.](#)



Appendix H N95 Respirator and Half and Full Face Types

To review or download the full document, [Click Here.](#)



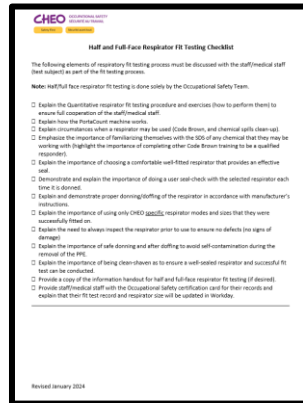
Appendix I Occupational Safety N95 Certification Card

To review or download the full document, [Click Here.](#)



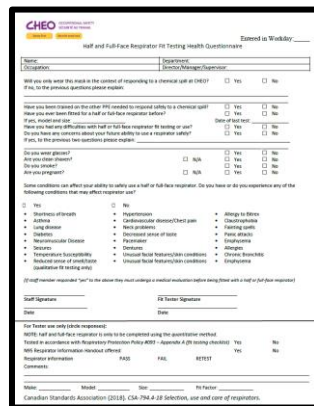
Appendix J Half and Full Face Respirator Fit Testing Checklist

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Appendix K Half and Full-Face Respirator Fit Testing Health Questionnaire

To review or download the full document, [Click Here.](#)



Appendix L Information Handout for Half and Full Face Respirator Fit Testing

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