

RESPIRATOR MASK CARE

PURPOSE: EMS responders provide medical care to persons whose presenting complaint may or may not be related to a respiratory communicable disease. The use of National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approved High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) respirator (mask) is a minimum level of respiratory protection when performing high hazard procedures. Fitting and care of these masks/respirators are essential, otherwise they will not protect from respiratory droplets and secretions.

INFORMATION: Masks are designed to filter microorganisms by protecting the wearer from others or more usually to protect others from the wearer. Oil is used to rate the effectiveness of the particulate filtration (PFE) of the mask. Other methods of classifying masks are according to their bacterial filtration efficiency (BFE) and their breathability or Delta P value. Masks are classified for their filtering efficiency according to the following:

- a. P class - these masks are oil proof
- b. R class - these masks are oil resistant
- c. N class - these masks are not resistant to oil.

| N-95 Respirator Mask | Surgical Mask |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A PFE greater than 95% (usually 99%) | A PFE greater than 95% (usually 99%) |
| A BFE greater than 95% (usually 99%) | A BFE greater than 95% (usually 99%) |
| A DeltaP less than 5.0 | A DeltaP less than 3.0 |

AUTHORITY: California Health and Safety Code Sections 1797.186, 1797.188-1797.189.

POLICY:

1. Respirator masks shall be fitted properly, in order to protect properly from respiratory droplets and secretions.
2. Every prehospital provider shall be "fit tested" to ensure the correct size mask is being worn.
3. Wearing the mask:
 - a. Application and removal of the mask must be practiced in order to remove it without contaminating hands or anything else.
 - b. Only handle the respirator mask by the tapes.
4. When wearing the respirator mask, the wearer must breathe properly by slow deep breaths and limiting conversation.
5. The N-95 respirator mask is designed to last for 6-8 hours, or shall be changed **immediately** if any of the following occur:
 - a. If you touch it
 - b. If it is grossly contaminated
 - c. If it becomes wet for any other reason
 - d. If it becomes hard to breath through
6. There is not need to wear the mask if you are not providing **direct** patient care in the patient care compartment.
7. Interim care when not in use:
 - a. Masks shall be hung up by the straps where it will not contaminate anything else.
 - b. Masks must never be worn around the neck.
 - c. Do not store the mask in a plastic or other type of bag, as the mask will contaminate the inside of the bag and will contaminate when removed.
 - d. When putting the mask on again, put on a pair of gloves and position the mask. Remove the gloves and immediately wash hands before putting on the rest of the PPE.
8. After a single use is completed or when necessary, dispose mask into the infectious waste bin for incineration.
9. The surgical mask shall be changed at least every two (2) hours when worn, as they do not have the same filtering properties as the N-95 respirator mask.

