

BILH Staff Annual Fit Testing Program (Reusable and Disposable Respirators) Talking Points for Managers

Why we are we conducting annual fit testing?

- Annual fit testing is once again enforceable under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. This requirement was waived during the earlier part of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In accordance with OSHA, BILH is requiring staff who are eligible to be fit tested to attend a session at their hospital or business unit to be fit tested to both their reusable respirator and one brand of disposable respirator.

Why are we fit testing primarily to the Halyard brand disposable respirator?

- In order to improve supply chain resiliency and move through our pandemic inventory prior to expiration dates, even staff who have historically been fit tested to a 3M brand disposable respirator will be fit tested to the Halyard brand this year.
- Halyard respirators have been used at several BILH sites over the past two years and have been well tolerated and accepted.
- Halyard disposable respirators will be the disposable brand of N95s available on all units this year. If you were not successfully fit tested to a Halyard and don't have your reusable respirator with you, please work with your manager to find out how to obtain the appropriate brand.

Why we are continuing to reinforce the use of reusable respirators?

- BILH continues to reinforce the use of reusable respirators as the primary respirator for many staff so that they can be "always ready" to care for patients who require a respirator for their care.
- CDC and NIOSH support the use of reusable respirators during regular patient care as well as times of shortage. **BILH is incorporating reusable respirators as a permanent part of our respiratory protection plan.**
- The COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing and while the supply chain has improved, it is still not as reliable as it was in pre-pandemic times.
- While disposable N95s are currently available for distribution across BILH, we do have limited brands available.
- Staff in both sterile and non-sterile areas can now wear reusable respirators since we have added the MSA Advantage brand, which has been reported by BILH staff as more comfortable, lightweight, and easier to be understood when speaking.
- A single reusable respirator may conserve hundreds of disposable N95 respirators, making them a better choice for our environment.
 - Disposable respirators can only be used once and are discarded once they are removed, creating waste that could be avoided with the use of reusable respirators.

What are we asking staff to do?

- Bring your current reusable (MSA, 3M or envo@mask) respirator to a fit testing session. These sessions will ensure your respirator is still protecting you and are where you can get new filters and a mini-refresher on seal checks, cleaning and disinfection.
- If you were fit tested for a reusable respirator, begin using it right away (if not doing so already) and make it your first choice in situations where a respirator is required.
- When not using a reusable respirator, wear the disposable respirator brand that you were fit tested to most recently (for most staff, this will be Halyards after the fit testing sessions)