



August 21, 2020

NEW Cal-OSHA Guidance on COVID-19 and Webinar on Elastomeric Respirators

Cal-OSHA recently issued new [Interim Guidance on COVID-19 for Health Care Facilities](#) regarding respirators and an invitation to a webinar on *The Use of Elastomeric Respirators in Health Care Settings* next Wednesday, August 26 from 10-11:30 am.

We encourage all ESC Local 20 members to attend the webinar to learn more about elastomeric respirators as a means of respiratory protection and how unions can actively play a role in the successful use of these as a more reliable and sustainable respirator option. Look below for more details on the presenters. Please [RSVP here](#).

As more information is gathered and understood about COVID-19, we want to make sure our members are armed with the most up-to-date information to advocate for proper PPE in the workplace during official Labor-Management meetings or on-the-spot. Here are the big takeaways from [new Cal-OSHA Interim Guidance on COVID-19](#):

1. Respirator shortages have improved to a point where hospitals should no longer prioritize respirators for high hazard procedures or use other optimization strategies. Respirators include N95s or their equivalent.
2. Respirators have to be available immediately for anyone who might be called on to perform an emergency aerosol-generating procedure (e.g., intubation or resuscitation). This means the employer may not give all N95s to one person who only hands them out when they deem it necessary, nor may they be locked up. They have to be available to grab quickly.
3. Employers should be providing powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) to all employees exposed to aerosol-generating procedures or an equivalent respirator. If a PAPR is unavailable and cannot be obtained, an N95 is the minimum protection that should be used, AND more protective respirators should be used if available, such as elastomeric respirators. *This is what will be covered in the Cal-OSHA webinar next week.*
4. Surgical masks cannot be used where a respirator is required.

5. There are acceptable ways to extend respirator use:

- Use industrial N95s.
- Use elastomeric respirators.
- Allow employees to use their own respirator as long as it complies with Cal/OSHA standards.
- Extend the use of respirators for a maximum period of 8-12 hours, as long as the person is seeing cohorted patients (e.g., they are working in a unit of all COVID-19 patients).
- Respirators can be collected and disinfected; HOWEVER, they must now be **stored** in case there are future N95 shortages. They are not to be passed out.

Cal/OSHA webinar on the Use of Elastomeric Respirators in Health Care Settings
Wednesday, August 26 from 10:00-11:30 AM

[Click Here to RSVP](#)

As the COVID-19 crisis in California enters its eighth month, many healthcare facilities and individual providers are considering using elastomeric respirators as a more reliable and sustainable means of respiratory protection.

At this webinar, presenters will provide information on how elastomeric respirators function to protect against COVID-19 and how some facilities have addressed issues such as selection, access, cleaning and disinfection, and storage. Presenters will also discuss successful strategies to work out the logistics at individual facilities, including the active involvement of employees and their unions.

Presenters:

Eric Berg, Deputy Chief, has a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering and a master's of public health degree in environmental health engineering. He began working for Cal/OSHA in 1997 as an industrial hygienist and became the Deputy Chief of Health for Cal/OSHA in 2015. Prior to Cal/OSHA, he worked for the California Department of Public Health and United Farm Workers.

Dr. Lisa Brosseau is recently retired from academia with research and policy expertise in respiratory protection focused on performance and use for infectious

disease exposures and in healthcare settings. She consults with a range of organizations on respiratory protection and infectious aerosol exposures.

Stella E. Hines, MD, MSPH, is an Associate Professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. She is an Occupational Medicine physician and Pulmonologist. Dr. Hines studies reusable respirator use in healthcare to address N95 shortages and has published and presented on this topic at national and international meetings.

Mark Catlin has almost 40 years of experience in industrial hygiene and currently consults for healthcare and other organizations. Since 1992, he has been involved in protecting workers from exposures to infectious disease, including the use of reusable elastomeric respirators in the healthcare sector.

Please follow the link below to register for the webinar. It is recommended that a “systems check” be performed prior to the webinar by following the instructions that will be provided to you in an email after you have registered. You will need to register a few days before the event to ensure your computer has the appropriate players to view the media files.

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2649838824828098832>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar with additional log-in instructions and a link to update your Microsoft Outlook Calendar with the webinar event.

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