

Protect Yourself **Pandemic Flu** Respiratory Protection

Although influenza viruses are thought to be transmitted primarily by droplets through the air and contact with contaminated surfaces, it is possible that transmission could also occur by small particulates. Because of this, during a pandemic use a NIOSH-certified respirator for work involving close contact with people who are or may be ill with the pandemic virus. N95 respirators provide the minimum level of protection needed. A surgical mask is not a respirator.

Who needs to wear a respirator?

“Very High Exposure Risk” Workers with high potential exposure to known or suspected sources of pandemic virus during specific medical or laboratory procedures – for example, cough induction procedures, bronchoscopy, some dental procedures, invasive specimen collection, or manipulating lab cultures. These workers may need supplied-air or powered air-purifying respirators.

“High Exposure Risk” Workers with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected pandemic sources - for example, doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff who enter patients’ rooms; and emergency responders transporting sick patients.

Other Workers whose work may not normally put them at Very High or High Exposure Risk but who, during a pandemic, are performing high-risk tasks such as isolating and quarantining people who are ill.

Respiratory Protection Program

Respirators must be used in the context of a comprehensive respiratory protection program, (see OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.134 or www.osha.gov) which includes:

- Medical evaluation
- Training
- Fit testing
- Written program

For more complete information: