

From: D Scarchilli [mailto:d_scarchilli@occuhealth.com]

Sent: Friday, May 27, 2016 2:46 PM

To: Alger, Donald (Don)

Cc: C Hughes

Subject: FW: N95/Dust Mask as it pertains to Respiratory Protection Program requirements

Don, it was a pleasure meeting you at the CMBEN meeting yesterday. OHI would like to add a clarification to the discussion about N95 respirators. At the meeting, it was mentioned that employees who wear dust masks are required to follow ALL elements of the respiratory protection standard. There are disagreements among safety professionals on whether or not an N95 is a dust mask, however careful review of the definitions section in 29 CFR 1910.134 reveals they are the same:

An N95 is an air-purifying negative pressure respirator with an N95 filter. Most N95s have the filter as an integral part of the facepiece, which is considered a "filtering facepiece respirator". OSHA, in 29 CFR 1910.134(b) *Definitions*, defines a filtering facepiece (otherwise known as a dust mask) as: a negative pressure particulate respirator with a filter as an integral part of the facepiece or with the entire facepiece composed of the filtering medium.

It really depends on whether you, as the employer, are *requiring* employees to wear these masks; or if the mask *can* be worn *voluntarily*. This is the crucial part. If **required**, then everyone who wears one must be included in the full written program, medical surveillance, annual fit testing, etc... If you *allow* your employees to wear the N95s **voluntarily** then you have to do only a few things:

1. Determine that such respirator use will not in itself create a hazard (document this and keep on file, can easily be accomplished by performing a JSA);
2. Ensure that any employee using a respirator voluntarily is medically able to use that respirator (not worried about the storage and cleaning requirement as N95s are disposable); AND
3. Posting (I recommend having each employee sign receipt of) 29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix D *Information for Employees using respirators when not required under the standard*.

Again, it boils down to what is your message to the employees: "respirator (dust mask) use is required in this area", or "respirator (dust mask) use is not required in this area but you can wear them as long as we verify it doesn't present a hazard, you prove you're medically able to wear it (which the employer must pay for), and you receive 29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix D".

https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=28565

Feel free to pass this onto the other attendees from yesterday's meeting. The information above was provided by Mr. Christopher Hughes, CSP. He is available to provide further clarification. Feel free to call or email him. Thank you.

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