

Please visit UC ANR EHS website for the latest updates and information on Protection from Wildfire Smoke:

<http://ucanr.edu/protectfromwildfiresmoke>

Before deciding to use a respirator, employees should take the following steps to reduce their wildfire smoke exposure to the lowest levels possible:

Know your air quality. Smoke levels can change a lot during the day, so wait until air quality is better before you are active outdoors. Check airnow.gov for air quality forecasts and current air quality conditions. On AirNow, you can also sign up to get email notifications, download an air quality app, or check current fire conditions.

Take it easier during smoky times to reduce how much smoke you inhale. If it looks or smells smoky outside, avoid strenuous activities. If you must go out, avoid the smokiest times of day. Discuss with your supervisor options for modifying duties, work schedules, and/or relocating tasks when the AQI for PM 2.5 is 151 or greater.

If possible, stay inside with the doors and windows closed. Building ventilation systems can provide some level of protection from wildfire smoke pollution. Seek shelter elsewhere if your building does not have air conditioning and it is too warm to stay inside with the windows closed.

Reduce smoke in your vehicle by closing the windows and vents and running the air conditioner in recirculate mode. Slow down when you drive in smoky conditions.

1. Which employees should use an N95 respirator for wildfire smoke?

Respirator use should only be considered **as last resort option** for employees who must spend more than one hour working in areas where the AQI for PM 2.5 is 151 or above. Employees who are NOT required to be outside to perform job functions should avoid outdoor work and seek shelter in indoor locations with acceptable air quality when outdoor AQI for PM 2.5 is 151 or greater.

Employees who have been trained to use a fit-tested respirator are authorized for voluntary use of N95 respirators as well. They may use their fit-tested respirator for protection from wildfire smoke pollution if they have been fit tested in the respirator within the last year or they may use an N95 respirator. Fit-tested respirators must not be used for fire-fighting or in any conditions that are immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH).

2. What should employees do before they use an N95 respirator for wildfire smoke?

- Complete and document annual training for use of the N95 mask. Supervisors must also review manufacturer's instructions for respirator use with employees. This training may be included in other annual safety training. Online training from EH&S is available here: <http://ucanr.edu/voluntaryn95training>
- Notify ANR EHS via the online Voluntary N95 Respirator Registration survey: <http://ucanr.edu/voluntaryn95registration>
- Receive a copy of the OSHA-mandated safety information about wildfire smoke (8CCR5141.1 App B.) available here: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/safety/files/308848.pdf>

3. We provide voluntary use N95 respirators (with no fit test or medical evaluation) to our employees for non-hazardous irritants like nuisance dust, can they use those N95 respirators for wildfire smoke as well?

Yes, as long as the employees receive the mandatory wildfire smoke information ([8CCR5141.1 appendix B](#)), document their training, and register their use with EHS.

4. What if an employee who needs to use an N95 respirator cannot find one that fits comfortably?

Contact UCANR EHS (<http://ucanr.edu/askehs>) to discuss specific needs. N95 respirators come in a variety of sizes and models. EHS specialists can assist employees and supervisors in finding other respirators or options for protection from wildfire smoke.

5. When should an N95 respirator that is used for wildfire smoke be discarded?

Respirators used for wildfire smoke (under voluntary provisions) should be discarded when they become difficult to breathe through (due to loaded filter), when they are damaged, or when the inside of the respirator or face seal area becomes soiled or unhygienic. Using a dirty respirator can be worse than using no protection!

6. How should the respirators provided by EHS be stored, handled, and distributed?

Respirators should be stored in the original packaging or in a sealed bag to maintain cleanliness and prevent crushing. Employees who expect to be required to use N95 respirators during wildfire events should read the manufacturer’s instructions for use and try one of each type of respirator to find out which one model seals to their face best and is most comfortable. The local office or department should then purchase a supply of the best fitting respirators for use by the employee in case of wildfire smoke emergency. Employees distributing respirators to others should take care to avoid touching the inside of the respirator mask. Ideally, the employee who will use the respirator should be the only person to handle the respirator.

7. What are the main features and key differences between different types of N95 respirators?

- Exhalation valves allow for exhaled breath to leave mask, making them cooler to wear.
- Metal nose piece allows for user to mold mask to fit the bridge of their nose, obtaining a customized fit.
- Masks without the metal nose piece come in 2 sizes and can be faster and easier to put on.
- Adjustable straps can be useful when comfortable fit is not possible with fixed straps.
- Low profile masks may be useful for employees who wear glasses and/or have smaller facial structure.

UCANR EHS Suggested Types of N95 Respirators

Photo of Respirator	Respirator model #	Unit Cost	Exhalation Valve	Metal Nose Piece	Size	Notes
	3M 1870/1870+	Box of 20 \$30.69	No	Yes	One Size	Flat fold, ind. wrap format is useful.
	3M 8511	Box of 10 \$26.80	Yes	Yes	One Size	Best fitting N95 in general use @ ANR
	Moldex 4600/4601	Box of 10 \$36.53	No	No	SML (4601) M/L (4600)	Adjustable strap, very easy breathing
	3M 9211+	Box of 10 \$17.23	Yes	Yes	One Size	Valved respirator similar to 3M 1870
	3M 8210V	Box of 10 \$12.79	Yes	Yes	One Size	Low profile, low cost alternative to other 3M models

Samples of 3M 1870, 3M 8511 and Moldex 4600/4601 are provided by EHS for fitting.