

**Municipality of Anchorage  
Anchorage Fire Department  
Memorandum**

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**DATE:** April 6, 2020

**OPS 20-19**

**TO:** All Personnel

**FROM:** Erich Scheunemann, Assistant Chief

**SUBJECT: Use of Facemasks and Respirators in the Workplace, Out in Public and on Responses**

The Anchorage Fire Department will now transition into the use of facemasks and respirators at all times while at work and on responses. This decision is based upon guidance from the CDC, Alaska's Chief Medical Officer, the Alaska and Anchorage Area Wide EMS Medical Director, and the International Association of Firefighters. This does not indicate that measures such as social distancing, frequent hand washing and strict attention to not touching the face can be relaxed.

There are several primary reasons for this change, including growing evidence that transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is occurring from infected persons who are asymptomatic and others who are shedding the virus up to 48 hours ahead of symptoms appearing. These will be discussed in more detail in the attached FAQ sheet.

This new posture will cause a rapid change in our logistical needs, which AC Boyd is addressing. The remaining surgical masks should be used by employees and the issued homemade fabric masks to be used on patients. Once the supply of surgical masks is exhausted, employees will need to transition to the homemade fabric masks as well.

The Respiratory Protection Levels and Reuse chart from *OPS 20-17 Crisis Reuse Strategies for N95 Respirators and North Half Mask Cartridges* has been updated, included below, and as an attachment for printing and reference. The *AFD COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety Manual* will also be updated.





**Guidance for Fabric or Surgical Masks at Worksites**




- Once issued, employees are advised to wear their facemasks while in the fire station or other worksites and when in out in public only when its critically necessary.
- Employees may consider changing facemasks every 8 to 12 hours while on shift, depending on their level of activity. Also, change masks if they are soiled. Discard if damaged.
- Hot, soapy water is the best method to clean and sanitize these masks and allow to air dry.
- Employees that choose not to wear a facemask while at the fire station or other worksite will need to isolate themselves in their office, bedroom or other area where other employees are not present. Don a mask prior to leaving that area.
- Homemade fabric masks that display offensive graphics, words and/or phrases, sports team logos or product advertisements are not permitted.
- It's encouraged to construct your own fabric mask and stations may construct their own to display organizational, station and/or shift pride.

- When exiting the fire apparatus or ambulances on emergency calls, members should switch to the N95 and properly store their facemask until the call is over.
- In addition to donning a mask while on shift, prioritize social distancing throughout the workplace, including in the dining area/kitchen table. Minimize potential risk for infection as much as possible and practical.
- Employees are also strongly encouraged to wear a facemask while at home and off duty. If you are not comfortable wearing a mask at home, then ensure you are practicing social distancing, exercising proper hand hygiene and disinfecting surfaces.
- Do not take your work facemask home. Leave it at work.
- Continue self-monitoring both on and off duty.

### **Respiratory Protection Levels and Reuse of Facemasks, N95, and North Cartridges**

- N95 respirators and face shields will be worn on all patient contacts within the 6-foot perimeter and in confined spaces (Hot Zone).
- It is recommended face shields are worn in Cold and Warm Zones in the event close or direct patient contact maybe be required of personnel.
- Limit personnel who have initial contact with all patients in the Hot Zone to one responder if safe to do so, and until they determine equipment and personnel needs.
- Reuse of N95s utilized in the High-Risk PPE - Hot Zone has been rescinded in an overabundance of caution or until the N95 stock levels become critical again.
- Always avoid touching the outer surfaces of the respirator or cartridges during direct patient contact or during aerosolized procedures and doff respirators in a careful and deliberate manner.
- The key consideration for safe extended use is that the respirator must maintain its fit and function.

<b><u>Fabric or Surgical Mask Use</u></b>	<b><u>Mask Type</u></b>	<b><u>Reuse of Mask</u></b>
All personnel will wear fabric or surgical masks when out in public	Homemade Fabric or Surgical Mask	
All personnel recommended to wear fabric or surgical mask in the workplace – if not wearing mask, must remain isolated from others	Homemade Fabric or Surgical Mask	
Fabric or surgical mask placed on all patients ( <b>Hot Zone</b> )	Homemade Fabric or Surgical Mask	
<b><u>Proximity to Patient During Encounter</u></b>	<b><u>Respirator Type (w/ Order of Preference)</u></b>	<b><u>Reuse of N95 and Cartridge Filters</u></b>
Remains outside of 6-foot perimeter and confined spaces ( <b>Cold Zone</b> ; <b>Warm Zone</b> ) – no close or direct patient contact	<b>N95</b>	

<p>Within 6 feet of <u>all Low-Risk PPE</u> patients and confined spaces - provider must be wearing face shield for N95 reuse  <b>(Hot Zone)</b></p>	<p><b>N95</b></p>	 
<p>Within 6 feet of <u>High-Risk PPE</u> patient  <b>(Hot Zone)</b></p>	<p><b>1. N95</b>  <b>2. North Half Mask</b></p>	
<p>All aerosol-generating treatments and procedures, includes all cardiac arrests  <b>(Hot Zone)</b></p>	<p><b>1. North Half Mask</b>  <b>2. N95</b></p>	