

What is a Respiratory Protection Program?

A Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) is a set of rules and regulations enforced by the Washington Department of Labor and Industries (also known as L&I). These rules and regulations are in place to keep workers from becoming sick or injured because of workplace exposures to hazards. One significant hazard comes from viruses that spread through the air when a sick or contagious person coughs, talks or sneezes. Spreading viruses through the air is a respiratory hazard.

Why does my LTC setting need an RPP? In Healthcare and Long-term care (LTC) settings, N95s are often used to protect workers from respiratory hazards. If you use an N95, then you must have an RPP. Having an RPP will keep your home in compliance with L&I's worker protection regulations and will keep your workers healthy so they can care for your residents and clients.

The Five Steps of the Respiratory Protection Program: These are the five steps you need to create your own RPP. Each step must be in place to comply with L&I and protect your workers and residents.



Written Program The written program is your policy and procedure on respiratory protection. Your written program must include all the elements including who is responsible for the program, medical evaluations, training, fit testing, and record keeping. Your workers must know where to find your written program to refer to it if they forget what to do.

Respirator Medical Evaluation A respirator medical evaluation is a list of questions that determines if it is safe for a worker to use an N95. Medical evaluation questions must be reviewed by a medical professional who gives the employer a paper saying it is safe for the employee to wear an N95 respirator. Answers to the medical evaluation questions must remain confidential. The employer only needs to know if the worker can use an N95, and when workers will need to retake the respirator medical evaluation.

Respirator Training Everyone who wears an N95 must have training before use. The training explains to your workers why the N95 is important, how to use it, where to store it, along with other requirements. This will provide knowledge on how to stay safe when caring for a resident in isolation or quarantine. Employees must take this training every year.

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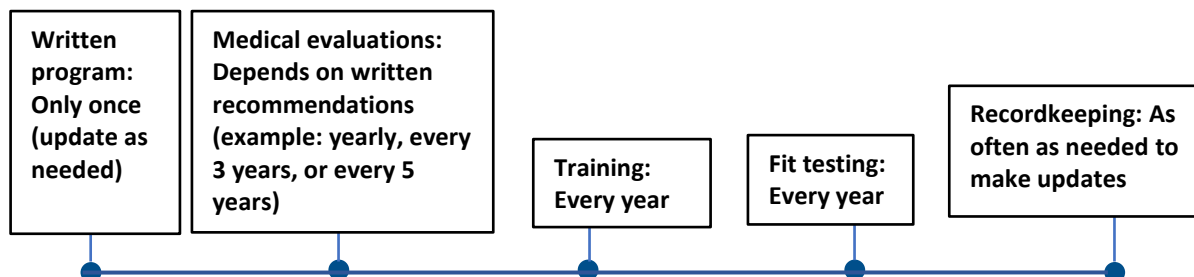
Fit Testing Respirator fit testing is a procedure that tests how well an N95 fits a worker's face. A good fit prevents inhaling a respiratory hazard. Any person trained to conduct fit testing can perform the fit test. Employees must wear the same exact style N95 they were fit tested to. Like the training, fit testing is also an annual requirement. If employees gain or lose weight, or if they have had some changes to their face, such as plastic surgery or dental work, then they must be fit tested again, even if it's before the yearly due date.

Recordkeeping You must keep the following RPP records: An up-to-date written copy of your RPP, current fit test records, training records and medical evaluations.

How do I get started? Start by contacting the DOH Occupational Health Team at HAIFitTest@doh.wa.gov! We help facilities like yours with each step of the RPP by:

- Providing the written program and respirator training templates for you to use
- Enrolling facilities into the 3M online medical evaluation program (free for a **limited time**)
- Offering the medical evaluation in other languages, ask us what languages it is available in
- Providing fit testing with our fit test vendor or with DOH staff
- Providing training on how to conduct your own fit testing

How often do I need to repeat the five steps?



Resources

- **DOH's RPP Website:** <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ltrcpp>
- **Request a L&I Consultation:** <https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/request-consultation/>
- **WAC 296-842 Safety Standards for Respirators:** <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=296-842>