



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600*

September 14, 2023

**This letter supersedes ALTSA Letters:**  
**AFH #2021-024; ALF #2021-024; ESF #2021-022; ICF/IID #2021-020; NH #2021-034**

**ALTSA: AFH #2023-030**  
**ALTSA: ALF #2023-022**  
**ALTSA: CCRSS #2023-017**  
**ALTSA: ESF #2023-020**  
**ALTSA: ICF/IID #2023-012**  
**ALTSA: NH #2023-030**

**PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVISION OF PERSONAL  
PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE), RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM (RPP), AND  
CHANGES TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RPP RESOURCES**

Dear Provider/Administrator/Superintendent:

The purpose of this letter is to give information on provider responsibilities related to:

- Provision of PPE in the Long-term care (LTC) settings.
- Employer responsibilities for respiratory protection and RPP.
- Changes to the Department of Health (DOH) RPP resources and support.

All LTC settings have requirements to prevent the spread of infection by following nationally recognized infection control standards. This includes providing staff with respiratory protection and PPE.

**PROVISION OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT IN THE LTC SETTING**

LTC setting providers are required to supply gowns, gloves, masks, respirators (if needed) and eye protection to staff who are providing care to residents or clients who have a known or suspected communicable disease.

**EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESPIRATORY PROTECTION AND RPP**

Employers are responsible to identify respiratory hazards in the workplace, provide appropriate respiratory protection equipment, and follow regulations pertaining to respiratory protection.

[WAC 296-842 Respirators](#)

[OSHA 1910.134 - Respiratory Protection](#)

The end of the public health emergency (PHE) did not end the need for protection from respiratory viruses that are spread through droplets or air.

**CHANGES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RPP RESOURCES AND SUPPORT**

During the PHE, DOH provided RPP resources for fit testing, medical clearance, training, policy template and consultation support for the rules and regulations of respiratory protection. The WA DOH RPP support will be changing in the following ways:

**3M Online Medical Evaluation changes:**

- After December 29, 2023, DOH will no longer cover the cost of 3M medical evaluations.

AL TSA Provider Letter: PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROVISION OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE), RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM (RPP), AND CHANGES TO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RPP RESOURCES

September 14, 2023

Page 2

- To prepare for this change, DOH will stop accepting requests to set up new accounts for providers in 3M after November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.
- Providers that have a 3M account as of December 1, 2023, will have until December 29, 2023, to get their accounts up to date and have their staff complete their medical evaluation.
- Starting January 2, 2024, providers wanting to stay with 3M, will need to prepay for their medical evaluations.
  - Each medical evaluation will cost \$29 and there is no expiration date for unused medical evaluations.
  - Providers may continue to use the same login to access their account.

**Fit Testing and Fit Tester Training:**

- Fit Testing: DOH no longer provides fit testing.
- Fit Tester Training: Provider can learn how to conduct their own fit testing.
  - DOH will provide [Fit Tester Training](#) until June 30, 2024.
  - Providers are encouraged to access the Fit tester training resources now, before this service ends.
  - If Fit Test training support is needed after attending the DOH Fit Tester Training webinar, please complete this [form](#).

**Consultation Support:**

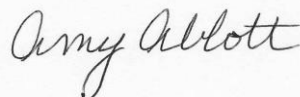
To assist facilities with the requirements for their respiratory protection program DOH will provide the following webinars until June 30, 2024:

- Every Tuesday at 3 p.m. – Respirator Program Template and N95 User Training Review Class - [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_p4QBvkB-Rd-9GrtNQE1vEA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_p4QBvkB-Rd-9GrtNQE1vEA)
- Every Friday at 10 a.m. – How to navigate the 3M Online Medical Evaluation System - [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-OJByQUSSLuzUQIzP\\_E0Q](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-OJByQUSSLuzUQIzP_E0Q)
- Every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at noon – DOH HAI/AR Occupational Health Team Lunch & Learn - [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf-6rrz8pGdYGM3j1vVbDVH3h8MJ\\_Epzb](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUuf-6rrz8pGdYGM3j1vVbDVH3h8MJ_Epzb)
- Twice a month – Respirator Fit Tester Training for Long Term Care Facilities – Visit our fit testing training website: [Fit Testing Training | Washington State Department of Health](#)

The PHE and COVID-19 pandemic brought forward the need for adherence to infection control standards and respiratory protection program requirements. Many lessons were learned that carry forward into our daily work.

Thank you for your continued commitment to staff, resident and client health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact Katherine Ander, Infection Control Prevention and Projects Specialist, at (360) 742-6037 or [katherine.ander@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:katherine.ander@dshs.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Amy Abbott, Director  
Residential Care Services

DSHS: “Transforming Lives”