

Lifespan

Delivering health with care.®

FIT-TESTING, FACIAL HAIR AND USE OF N95-LEVEL RESPIRATORS--REVISED January 16, 2021

Employees using N95-level respirators must adhere to their affiliate-specific policies. These policies comply with OSHA regulations which require proper fit testing for all employees using negative pressure tight-fitting respirators. According to OSHA's requirements, anything that comes between your face and the respirator's seal can allow contaminated air to leak into the respirator facepiece and you will not be protected.

Facial Hair: Facial hair, like a beard or mustache, can affect your respirator's ability to protect you. Beards present serious problems for facepiece respirators because their texture and density vary daily, causing unreliable respirator fit, risk to the wearer, and a potential violation of OSHA's regulations. As a result, employees using N95 or equivalent respirators should maintain a close shave to ensure their protection and regulatory compliance. *****See below chart for additional guidance on permissible facial hair.**

For those employees with facial hair that interferes with a successful fit-test, we will attempt to fit-test you with a beard wrap wherever possible.

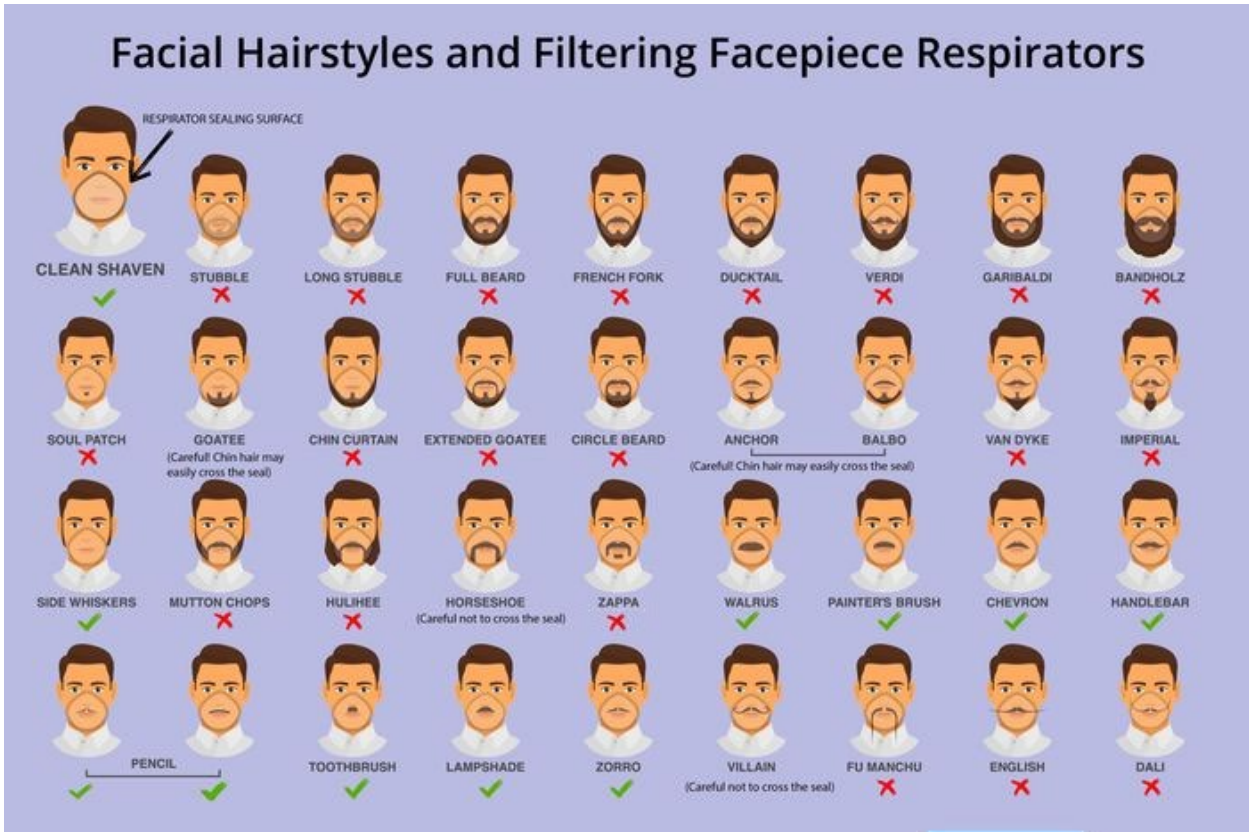
- Those employees who are able to pass fit-testing successfully using a beard wrap may continue to use it with their N95-level respirator.
- Those employees who fail fit-testing with a beard wrap, or those who fail because of facial structure, inability to taste, or other reasons, may be eligible for an accommodation under Lifespan's Religious or Reasonable Accommodations policies. If these policies apply, please have the employee contact Employee and Occupational Health Services and completing the accommodation request form.

Employees who refuse to be fit-tested at all may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Lifespan's Counseling and Corrective Action policy (see link below). Please contact your HR Business Partner with specific concerns or questions.

Other Interfering Conditions: Additionally, there may be other conditions that could result in facepiece seal leakage or interfere with valve function of tight-fitting respirators, such as long hair, the wearing of jewelry, or the use of headgear that projects under the facepiece seal. Corrective glasses or goggles or other personal protective equipment (such as face shields, protective clothing, and helmets) must not interfere with the seal of the facepiece to the face of the user.

Makeup: Makeup and other facial products such as lotions may cause masks to soil quickly requiring more rapid replacement resulting in a mask shortage. Please limit your use of such products to help preserve our mask supplies.

*****Some limited facial hairstyles – such as small mustaches that do not extend beyond the mouth – may be permissible, provided the facial hair does not interfere with the proper seal of the mask or respirator. Please see chart below.**



Relevant Policies and Links:

- Lifespan Counseling and Corrective Action Policy:
https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/5.3-%20Counseling%20and%20Corrective%20Action_1.pdf
- Rhode Island Hospital Care and Use of Respirators Policy (SM-30) https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/sm-30_20150609145105.pdf
- The Miriam Hospital Respiratory Protection Program (SM-09a) https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/SM-09a%20Resp%20Program%202018_0.pdf
- Newport Hospital Control Policy (508) <https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/508%20Respiratory%20Protection%20Program%2005.19.pdf>
- Bradley Hospital and Gateway Healthcare Respiratory Protection Program Policy <https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/respiratory-protection-program.pdf>
- Lifespan Appearance Standard Policy (5.21) https://intranet.lifespan.org/sites/default/files/5.21-appearance-standard%205.31.2019_2.pdf

