

# OSHA Releases Temporary Guidance:

## *Healthcare Respiratory Protection Annual Fit-Testing for N95 Filtering Facepieces During the COVID-19 Outbreak*

On March 11, 2020, the President directed the Department of Labor (DOL) in a Memorandum to, “...take all appropriate and necessary steps to increase the availability of general use respirators for emergency use by healthcare personnel in healthcare facilities.”

In response to the Memorandum, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) put out temporary guidance that went **effective March 14, 2020** and will remain in effect until further notice.

OSHA recommends two (2) ways employers can help conserve the use and supply of N95 respirators:

1. Provide healthcare providers (HCP) with **another respirator of equal or higher protection**, such N99 or N100 filtering facepieces, reusable elastomeric respirators with appropriate filters or cartridges, or powered air purifying respirators (PAPR).
2. Change the method of fit-testing from quantitative to qualitative. **Qualitative fit-testing** is a non-destructive fit-testing method, which means the respirator can safely be worn after the fit-test for work tasks requiring respiratory protection.

Additional guidance is available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, [Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of N95 Respirators](#).

The OSHA Memorandum is available in its entirety at: <https://www.osha.gov/memos/2020-03-14/temporary-enforcement-guidance-healthcare-respiratory-protection-annual-fit>.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smcx.org/>.



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