Guidance on the Proper Use of a Respirator

Face masks and respirators are critical to stopping the spread of COVID-19. The CDC advises that respirators provide a higher level of personal protection than loosely woven cloth or layered finely woven cloth products. The respirator is designed to protect you by filtering the air and fitting closely on your face to block particles, including the COVID-19 virus, from entering your breathing zone. Respirators offer effective containment of droplets and particles you exhale, cough, or sneeze out so you do not spread them to others.

The guidance contained in this document is being provided to help you use a respirator safely, including how to put on, adjust the fit, check the seal, and take off the device.

Putting on the Respirator

• Before putting on a respirator, make sure that you inspect it for damage. If it appears damaged, **DO NOT** use it. Replace it with a new one.
• **DO NOT** allow facial hair, hair, jewelry, glasses, clothing, or anything else to prevent proper placement or come between your face and the respirator.
• Hand Hygiene: WASH YOUR HANDS thoroughly before putting on the respirator.
    • Step 1: Place your fingers through the ear loops to open the respirator.
    • Step 2: Position the respirator over your nose and mouth with the metal nose clip at the top.
    • Step 3: Place the ear loops securely over your right and left ears.
    • Step 4: Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nose clip. Slide fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to mold the nose clip to the shape of your nose for a secure fit.
    • Step 5: Checking Your Seal:
    (a) Place both hands over the respirator; take a quick breath in to check whether the respirator seals tightly (collapses slightly) on the face.
    (b) Place both hands completely over the respirator and exhale. If you feel significant leakage, there is not a proper seal.
    (c) If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nose clip as described. If air leaks at the mask edges, re-adjust the straps on your ears and the sides of your face until a proper seal is achieved.
    (d) If you cannot achieve a proper seal due to air leakage, ask for help or try a different size or model.

Removing Your Respirator

• DO NOT TOUCH the front of the respirator! It may be contaminated!
• Remove the respirator by taking off the ear loops one at a time, without touching the respirator.
• If you no longer need your respirator because it is soiled or contaminated, discard it in a waste container.
• WASH YOUR HANDS thoroughly immediately after removing the respirator.

Wear
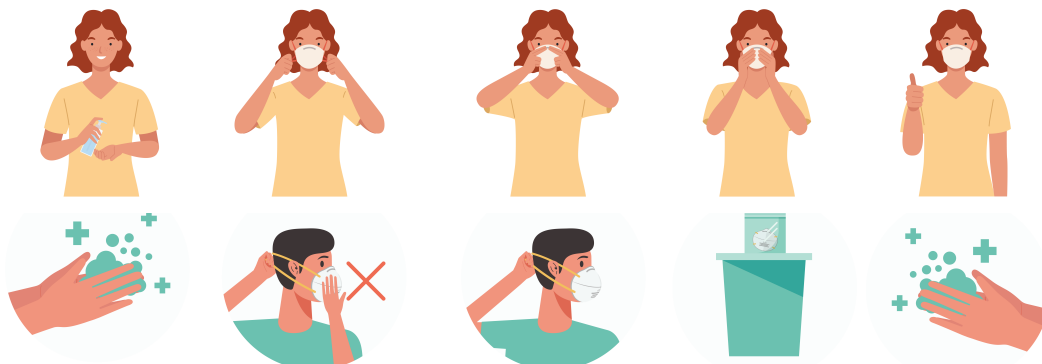
Remove

If you have any questions, please contact the Environmental Health and Safety Department by sending an e-mail to **EHS@nycha.nyc.gov.**