1.0 Purpose & Scope

This interim guidance on the voluntary use of respiratory protection specifically applies to Animal Care and Use work-related activities involving the use of only filtering-facepiece respirators, such as a N-95 disposable particulate mask. The voluntary use of a filtering-facepiece respirator (N-95 disposable particulate mask) is a component of the University's global strategy to reduce exposure to lab animal allergens. Additional information about animal allergies can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/animalrt.html.

2.0 Precautions & Limitations

The voluntary use of respirators applies only when it has been determined that such respirator use will not in itself create a hazard and when an assessment has been made that no identified occupational exposures to hazardous chemicals or agents exceeding established WISHA Permissible Exposure Limits (PEL) exist or that there are any specification standards requiring the mandatory use of respirators.

If an employee requests to wear a respirator other than a filtering-facepiece respirator, they must contact their supervisor. The supervisor must contact the EH&S OHS Office to initiate the appropriate respirator program procedures that cover medical evaluations, cleaning, storage and maintenance related program elements as required by WAC 296-62-07117 (3).

Any employee who experiences any difficulties while wearing the filtering-facepiece respirator must immediately inform their supervisor.

3.0 Procedure

After determination has been made that respirator use is for lab animal allergies risk reduction only. Then:

(1) Employees, you must: (a) Notify your supervisor that you want to wear a filtering-facepiece respirator.

(2) Supervisors, you must: (a) provide the respirator user with the “Important Information About Voluntary Use of Respirators” handout (OHS Form 405, Voluntary Respirator Use form), (b) ensure that the employee understands the handout content and signs the form; (c) maintain a copy of the signed form for your records and ensure respirator user keeps their signed copy.

Employees are responsible for the proper use and care of the respirator in compliance with manufacturer's instructions.

4.0 Forms

EHS Form 405: “Important Information About Voluntary Use of Respirators”

5.0 References & Resources

WISHA WAC 296-62-07117 – What must you do when employees choose to wear respirators when respirators are not required?