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*Agency of  
Human Services*

## **Vermont Licensed Residential Facility N95 Fit Testing Guidance**

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the need for all Vermont residential facilities to be prepared to care for COVID-19 positive patients, should that need arise. The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL), via Vermont's State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), has worked to ensure facilities are equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment, to include N95 masks. Many facilities had not previously needed to utilize N95 masks for resident care; accordingly, DAIL/SEOC mapped out a plan to offer one-time N95 fit testing for facilities in March-June 2020, to ensure their staff who might need to wear masks, are wearing masks that are properly fitted to their faces, and that they are medically cleared to do so.

The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and its Vermont counterpart VOSHA, mandates that if an employer requires an employee to wear an N95 respirator in the course of their work, they must have a Written Respiratory Protection Program (WRPP) in place. This WRPP prescribes the frequency of N95 fit testing, training, medical certification for staff at a facility and specifies how the program is administered.

This document provides statewide resources for facilities so that they can maintain adherence to VOSHA guidelines related to their staff wearing N95 respirators from this point forward.

### **N95 Fit Testing Resources:**

#### **Area Hospitals and Emergency Medical Services:**

Many area hospitals and EMS departments have the capacity in normal times to provide N95 fit testing to those that request it. Some of these organizations will also provide this service at no cost as a community service. There are commercial organizations who also provide this service for a fee.

#### **Some Commercial Fit Testing Companies that serve the Vermont market:**

- ATC, Phone: 802 871 8355 or 802 881 8685  
<https://atcgroupservices.com/>
- Concentra, Phone: 802-658-5756  
<https://www.concentra.com/physical-exams/respirator-fit-test/>
- Examinetics, Phone: 1-800-493-5377  
<https://www.examinetics.com/>

### **Train the Trainer Model for N95s by Residential Facilities or Programs:**

N95 Fit testing kits are available to purchase online. Instructional videos on how to use these kits are also available online. A best practice would be to invite an area hospital or EMS medical professional to demonstrate how the fit testing is done and learn how to do it properly. Another possible practice would be for one facility in an area to take the lead learning how to fit test staff, conduct them, and then assist other local facilities that were interested in participating. They could also choose to switch roles in subsequent years to spread out the costs.

### **Training on Wearing a N95 Respirator:**

OSHA requires that in addition to being fit tested to an N95 respirator, anyone who is required to use one needs to be trained on how to properly wear it. One role of the commercial fit testing companies is to do this training in conjunction with the N95 fit test. Alternatively, this N95 respirator training can be located online and a coordinated effort by a program assisting staff with watching these videos will satisfy the requirement by OSHA for training on how to wear an N95. Project WorkSAFE referenced below can also help with training resources for N95 respirators.

### **Medical Examinations:**

Medical Examinations are required by OSHA before N95 fit testing can be done. The medical examinations are to be conducted by a licensed medical professional. A medical staff person of a residential facility cannot conduct medical examinations for its own staff for fit testing. The medical professional will certify if someone is cleared to wear a N95, or not, or request additional information if it is required before they can be cleared. A staff person can use their own primary care provider to provide medical clearance however the employer is required by OSHA to pay for any cost incurred for this service (copay, etc.) as it is a work related expense for the employee.

### **Private entities that provide medical examination services for N95 Fit Testing in Vermont:**

- Concentra, Phone: 802-658-5756  
<https://www.concentra.com/physical-exams/respirator-fit-test/>
- Occupational Health Partners, Phone: 833-727-8671  
<https://ohp.healthcare/>

### **Written Respiratory Protection Plan:**

A WRPP prescribes the frequency of N95 fit testing, training, medical certification for staff at a facility and specifies how the program is administered. Project WorkSAFE is a division of the Vermont Department of Labor. Project WorkSAFE provides consultation to Vermont employers regarding OSHA requirements and is available to consult on all aspects of the WRPP for no charge.

- Project WorkSAFE, Phone: 1-888-723-3937  
<https://labor.vermont.gov/project-worksafe>