

WAC 296-820-840 Respiratory protection. (1) Where the current $PM_{2.5}$ is $20.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 69) to $35.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 100), the employer is encouraged to provide N95 filtering-facepiece respirators at no cost to employees upon request. Employees may provide and wear their own respiratory protection as long as voluntary use of these respirators does not introduce hazards to the work environment.

(2) Where the current $PM_{2.5}$ is $35.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 101) to $250.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 300), the employer must provide N95 filtering-facepiece respirators at no cost to all exposed employees, and must encourage respirator use. Employers must provide respirators by either of the following methods:

- (a) Directly distribute to each exposed employee; or
- (b) Maintain a sufficient supply for all exposed employees at each work location where exposure occurs. Such respirator supply availability and locations must be made known, and be readily accessible, to all exposed employees in a manner that does not restrict or hinder employee access to obtain and replace respirators when needed.

(3) Where the current $PM_{2.5}$ is $250.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 301) to $500.3 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 499), the employer must distribute N95 filtering-facepiece respirators directly to each exposed employee, and must encourage respirator use.

(4) (a) Where the current $PM_{2.5}$ is $500.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 500) to $554.9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (beyond the AQI), employees must be enrolled in a complete respiratory protection program in accordance with chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators, except as provided in (b) of this subsection. The employer must provide and require to be worn one of the following respirators:

- (i) N95 filtering-facepiece respirator;
- (ii) Half-facepiece air-purifying respirator equipped with P100 filters; or
- (iii) Other respirators equipped with P100 filters, with an assigned protection factor of 10 or greater as listed in WAC 296-842-13005 Select and provide appropriate respirators.

(b) This subsection does not apply to employees exposed to $PM_{2.5}$ for a total of 15 minutes or less during a 24-hour period.

(5) Where the current $PM_{2.5}$ is $555 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (beyond the AQI) or more, employees must be enrolled in a complete respiratory protection program in accordance with chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators. The employer must provide and require to be worn one of the following respirators equipped with P100 filters:

- (a) Loose-fitting powered air-purifying respirator;
- (b) Full-facepiece air-purifying respirator;
- (c) Full-facepiece powered air-purifying respirator; or
- (d) Other respirators with an assigned protection factor of 25 or more as listed in WAC 296-842-13005 Select and provide appropriate respirators, such that the $PM_{2.5}$ levels inside the respirator are less than $55.5 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ (AQI 151).

(6) Respirators must be NIOSH-approved devices that effectively protect the wearers from inhalation of wildfire smoke.

(7) The employer must use WAC 296-820-825 in lieu of the advisory information in Table 2 of WAC 296-842-11005 Make sure voluntary use of respirators is safe, for training regarding voluntary use of respirators for wildfire smoke.

(8) Respirators must be cleaned, stored, maintained, and replaced so that they are in good working order, and do not present a health hazard to users. Replace or repair any respirator that is not functioning properly, and do not permit their use. Filtering-facepiece respirators must not be cleaned, repaired, or shared. Dispose of and replace any filtering-facepiece respirator that is dirty, damaged, or difficult to breathe through. Elastomeric respirators must be properly cleaned and disinfected before being worn by another employee.

- Notes:
- Respirator use is not considered voluntary when an employer requires respirators to be used. A complete respiratory protection program in accordance with chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators, is required if the employer chooses to require respirator use.
 - For voluntary use of filtering-facepiece respirators, such as N95 respirators, some of the requirements of chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators, such as fit-testing and medical evaluations, do not apply.
 - Elastomeric respirators equipped with P100 filters may be used in place of N95 filtering-facepiece respirators. If elastomeric respirators are used voluntarily, additional requirements apply from chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators, such as medical evaluations and establishing a respiratory protection program.
 - For voluntary or required use of loose-fitting powered air-purifying respirators, some of the requirements of chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators, do not apply, such as fit-testing and requiring workers to be clean-shaven.
 - During emergency response, required use of respirators must be implemented to the extent feasible.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060, and chapter 49.17 RCW. WSR 24-01-070, § 296-820-840, filed 12/14/23, effective 1/15/24.]