

UC ANR EHS recommendations for employee or volunteer use of N95 masks during and following local wildfire events

U.S. Centers for Disease Control has issued the following recommendations for protecting yourself from breathing wildfire smoke:

<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/wildfires/smoke.html>

In general, supervisors and their employees should follow voluntary use provisions on the UC ANR EHS website:

http://safety.ucanr.edu/Programs/Respiratory_Protection_Program/Voluntary_Use_Provisions/

Important points for voluntary use of N95 masks:

- Specific regulatory information **MUST** be provided to employees who are using N95 masks under voluntary provisions. A convenient handout is provided on the UC ANR website: <http://safety.ucanr.edu/files/273360.pdf>
- Supervisors must review manufacturer's instructions for respirator use with employees. Supervisors and trainers should stress the fact that the mask is provided for nuisance dust only and will not provide protection from hazardous chemicals or vapors.
- People with pre-existing heart conditions, lung conditions, claustrophobia, or sensory impairment should consult their physician before using N95 masks. Use of N95 masks may cause serious harm or death in people with pre-existing cardiopulmonary issues.
- Disposable N95 masks should be discarded at end of the day or sooner if mask becomes loaded with particulates and difficult to breathe through.
- CalOSHA requirements for respirator use do not apply to individuals who are not employed by UC ANR. UC ANR's voluntary use policy only applies to use of N95 respirators by ANR employees and county staff working under ANR supervisors on ANR projects. Voluntary use provisions may be followed for ANR volunteers *working in ANR programs*. All other UC campus employees and outside contractors must follow requirements set forth by their employer and are not allowed to use N95 masks under UC ANR voluntary provisions.
- EHS recommends use of N95 respirator with an exhaust valve. The exhaust valve will allow the hot exhaled breath to leave the mask, but will still filter the particulates out of the inhaled air.



Photos of N95 masks with exhaust valves