

Background

On March 11, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the novel coronavirus COVID-19 a pandemic.

The virus, first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China has spread to [at least 167 countries](#), across six of the seven continents. As of March 27, 2020, there have been over [550,000 cases](#) and over [25,000 deaths](#) worldwide.

The [first case in the United States](#) was announced on January 21, 2020. As of March 27, 2020, over 92,000 new cases have been recorded and more than 1000 deaths have occurred in the U.S., according to Johns Hopkins. Officials estimate the real figures are much higher. Current infected and mortality rates of coronavirus COVID-19 in the U.S. can be found [here](#).

It has been confirmed that the virus can spread through human to human contact by airborne, droplet, and direct contact transmission, in addition to touching hard surfaces contaminated with the virus. Common symptoms of coronavirus COVID-19 include a dry cough, fever, and a general feeling of being unwell.

This very fluid situation is being evaluated on a daily basis by governments around the world.

Guidance and Support

According to the CDC's Transmission-Based Precautions webpage, "Airborne precautions," among other precautions include:

"Use personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriately, including a fit-tested NIOSH-approved N95 or higher level respirator for healthcare personnel."

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/transmission-based-precautions.htm>

In March 2020, the CDC issued the following [checklist](#) to help healthcare professionals working with individuals with confirmed cases of COVID-19:

Front-line healthcare personnel in the United States should be prepared to evaluate patients for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The following checklist highlights key steps for healthcare personnel in preparation for transport and arrival of patients with confirmed or possible COVID-19.

- Stay up to date on the latest information about signs and symptoms, diagnostic testing, and case definitions for [coronavirus disease 2019](#).*
- Review your infection prevention and control policies and CDC [infection control recommendations for COVID-19](#) for:*
- Assessment and triage of patients with acute respiratory symptoms*
- Patient placement*
- Implementation of Standard, Contact, and Airborne Precautions, including the use of eye protection*
- Visitor management and exclusion*
- Source control measures for patients (e.g., put facemask on suspect patients)*

- Requirements for performing aerosol generating procedures
- Be alert for patients who meet the *persons under investigation (PUI)* definition
- Know how to report a potential COVID-19 case or exposure to facility infection control leads and public health officials
- Know who, when, and how to seek evaluation by occupational health following an unprotected exposure (i.e., not wearing recommended PPE) to a suspected or confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 patient
- Remain at home, and notify occupational health services, if you are ill
- Know how to contact and receive information from your state or local public health agency

An Emergency Authorization Use (EUA) notice was issued on March 2, allowing the use of certain expired respirators for healthcare workers including seven different Moldex N95 models. All currently available Moldex disposable NIOSH approved respirators have been authorized for healthcare use under the EUA on Appendix B. You can read more about respirator expiration dating and the Emergency Authorization Use notice [here](#).

On March 14, 2020 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released temporary enforcement guidance regarding N95 usage in light of the shortage of respiratory protection. The [guidance states](#) the following, “Inform workers that the employer is temporarily suspending the annual fit testing of N95 respirators to preserve and prioritize the supply of respirators for use in situations where they are required to be worn.”

This situation is rapidly changing and the public, as well as healthcare workers are advised to refer to the latest CDC and WHO guidelines for protection guidance.

Additional Resources

Information and guidance from the CDC and WHO can be found at the following links:

- CDC** – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>
 – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/healthcare-supply-ppe.html>
 – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 – <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/index.htm>

WHO – <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

OSHA guidance for employers – https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/index.html

Moldex Note: Respiratory protective devices are only effective when they are properly fitted and worn. Where NIOSH certified respirators are used, this should be in conjunction with a comprehensive respiratory protection program in compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 29 CFR 1910.134 as a minimum. This includes but is not limited to medical evaluation, training and fit testing.

WARNING: No respirator can completely protect the user from exposure to 100% of airborne particulates and specifically particulates that may spread coronavirus. Moldex N95 respirators when properly fitted and worn will reduce exposure to airborne particulates but cannot completely eliminate such exposure. Exposure and sickness or death may still occur even with proper fitting and use of any respirator.

IMPORTANT: The information contained in this Tech Brief is dated and was accurate to the best of Moldex’s knowledge, on the date above. It is not meant to be comprehensive, nor is it intended to be used in place of the warning/use instructions that accompany Moldex respirators. Outside of the USA, check with all applicable and local government regulations.