



# Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson

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## **For Immediate Release**

Starting today, 5.4.2020, any entity serving in a healthcare or other congregate setting in Arkansas who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials can have their N95 masks decontaminated and returned to them at no cost, so long as they are not cellulose-based and meet other requirements. Respirators must be certified by NIOSH as an N95. If NIOSH hasn't certified it, Battelle does not recommend decontamination via our process. The decontamination of PAPR hoods, face shields or other types of PPE is not being processed at this time. We are currently awaiting guidance on KN95 masks and will provide an update on their potential use for

To help assist you in determining if your N95 respirator contains cellulose, we have created an N95 Guidance document for your reference. [N95 Guidance Document](#)

Healthcare providers and facilities include, but are not limited to emergency medical service personnel, nurses, nursing assistants, physicians, technicians, therapists, phlebotomists, pharmacists, dentists, dental hygienists, hospitals, department of corrections and detention facilities, critical infrastructure companies, private clinics, veterinary clinics, EMS Agencies and first responder agencies, etc.

Arkansas has been provided the use of the Battelle Critical Care Decontamination System (CCDS) which can help address the current shortage of critical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) across the United States, specifically designed to work on N95 respirators for the decontamination of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

If your organization is interested in utilizing this process, please see the following guidance.

Detailed instructions are also provided in the attachment accompanying this letter/email, and should be referenced and followed exactly as outlined. Various links are also provided throughout this document. If there are question regarding any of these processes, please contact Battelle at 1-800-201-2011 or [solutions@battelle.org](mailto:solutions@battelle.org).

1. The first step is registering to be part of the service by going to the following website, <https://www.battelle.org/decon>.

2. You should receive a follow-up email, but if you don't the next step is to download the [Services Agreement \[doc\]](#), have your authorized representative sign it and return by email to [PPEDecontaminationContracts@battelle.org](mailto:PPEDecontaminationContracts@battelle.org). We will issue back a countersigned agreement.
3. Once your signed services agreement has been sent, download and complete the [Site Locations and POC Information form \[xlsx\]](#) and return by email to Tore Stornes [stornest@battelle.org](mailto:stornest@battelle.org).  
*Note: Each row of data in the excel sheet should be for a physical location at which you would like to send and receive masks. Example a countywide fire department would want to put in a line for each firehouse so each can send and receive masks directly.*
4. 3-digit site codes for each location will be provided to you after the services agreement is executed. The 3-digit codes are to be marked on each N95 respirator you collect. Begin collecting and labeling your N95 respirators. Each N95 respirator must be handled and labeled properly to be decontaminated. Below (and attached) are specific instructions for details on how to collect, label, and package your respirators for shipment.
  - Label your own individual compatible N95 respirator using a permanent marker; do not label others' or ask others to label for you.
  - Labeling should be legibly written on the outside OR inside of each compatible N95 respirator, as shown in the linked and attached documents.
    - i. [Instructions for Healthcare Personnel](#) (mask marking) [pdf]
    - ii. [Instructions for Healthcare Facilities](#) [pdf]
    - iii. [HCP - Fact Sheet](#) [pdf]
  - Should your facility like your N95s to also have a specific floor or unit attached to them please use a 2-digit code of your choosing added after the three-digit code.

**It is VERY IMPORTANT that every N95 is properly labeled and free of any visible soiling** such as blood, bodily fluids, and makeup. We cannot decontaminate N95s that do not meet these requirements.

**Please consider the following for your organization.**

In order to reduce lost inventory due to damaged masks, oils, Vaseline and make-up on masks can lead to masks that cannot be cleaned. Please educate your staff on this and we have seen an over a 10% increase in viable masks being submitted.

Include signs/posters at all of the collection boxes educating staff on their use, and provide the FAQ guide to all clinicians in the program. Consider an internal Email inbox to answer all questions, to ensure follow-up on all concerns, as well as reoccurring reminders through facility newsletters.

5. Acceptable N95s can again be referenced here: [N95 Guidance Document](#)
  - Due to incompatibility, the Battelle Decontamination System is not authorized for use with respirators containing cellulose-based materials.
  - All compatible N95 respirators provided to Battelle must be free of any visual soiling or contamination (e.g. blood, bodily fluids, makeup).
  - Compatible N95 respirators that are visually soiled or damaged should not be collected for decontamination and will be disposed of and not returned after decontamination.
6. The N95s should be prepared for shipment. The process is as follows and details are provided in the attached documents.
  - Bags containing the contaminated compatible N95 respirators to be decontaminated by Battelle ("primary collection bag") should be closed.
  - Place the primary collection bag into another bag ("secondary collection bag") (provided by the healthcare facility), which is then closed.
  - Decontaminate the secondary collection bag with alcohol or other suitable decontaminant.
  - Place the decontaminated bags into a rigid, closed box (supplied by the healthcare facility) clearly labeled with a biohazard symbol, and tape the box securely shut.
  - Label the outside of the box with the 3-digit site code and 2-digit location identifier. Place chain of custody form on outside of box.
7. Shipment of the N95s can be completed in one of the following ways.
  - Pre-paid Fed-Ex shipping.
    - i. Once the N95s have been packaged as required, at your request from Battelle, a pre-paid fed-ex shipping label will be provided to you for shipping of your N95s. You will need to include a UN3373 label on the outside of the box. Battelle will also return the decontaminated N95s back to the address of the location via Fed-Ex.
  - Your institution may also drop off your N95s that have been packaged appropriately, at the Battelle CDDS drop off, located at 7400 Scott Hamilton Drive, Little Rock Arkansas, between the hours of 0800 – 1600 M-F only.
8. Returning of N95s: Following decontamination, you will be provided decontaminated compatible N95 respirators that have been processed through a decontamination system for reuse by healthcare personnel in a healthcare setting during the COVID-19 pandemic. Before reuse, the healthcare facility should review the chain of custody form, which indicates successful decontamination, accompanying the returned respirators. The healthcare facility should also inspect each returned, decontaminated compatible N95 respirator for:

1. Numeric indication of the decontamination cycle number. **NOTE:** Compatible N95 respirators will be disposed of after 20 decontamination cycles. This will be tracked by the Battelle tracking system.
2. Visible damage or soiling. **NOTE:** Compatible N95 Respirators should be discarded and not reused if visually damaged or soiled.
3. If N95s, after inspection on site, are determined to not meet the requirements they will be discarded and not returned. Therefore, it is possible that twenty N95s are submitted, and only have 15 returned.

Here is a list of resources that you will find helpful.

The initial sign-up for service form can be found here: <https://www.battelle.org/inquiry/offerings-and-services/covid-response>.

The direct link to the website with all the information is: [www.battelle.org/decon](http://www.battelle.org/decon).

Some key highlights can be found below for convenience. These documents, amongst other things, describe the service and provide detailed instructions on how to collect and label N95 respirators.

#### [FAQ Page](#)

- [Instructions for Healthcare Personnel](#)
- [Instructions for Healthcare Facilities](#) (including how to mark masks and how to prepare mask for shipping)
- [Health Care Personnel Fact Sheet](#)
- [Draft Services Agreement](#)
- [Chain of Custody Form](#)
- [Technical Summary of the Critical Care Decontamination System](#)