

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR FLIGHT STANDARDS SERVICE (FS)
REGARDING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19), PERSONAL PROTECTION, AND SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES**

1. Is Flight Standards Service (FS) Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Program sending out additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

No. The FS OSH Program is providing supplies only for the mission critical aircraft accident investigation go-kits.

2. What is the difference between a surgical/medical mask and an N95 filtering facepiece respirator?

Surgical style masks keep your sneeze and cough droplets from getting beyond your personal area. They also help prevent you from touching your face. These are the style a dental hygienist will wear when cleaning your teeth. They can be worn by anyone with any underlying health conditions.

Pictures of surgical masks:



An N95 filtering facepiece respirator is in significant demand for the healthcare industry during this coronavirus pandemic. Although frequently called a mask, the N95 is a respirator per Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. This product filters at least 95% of airborne particles, but is not resistant to oil. The N stands for non-oil. Prior to wearing an N95 filtering facepiece respirator, the employee must have a medical clearance, fit test, and training.

Pictures of N95 respirators:



3. Can an employee use the P100 respirators in the aircraft accident go-kits for surveillance activities?

No. The P100s are for the mission critical activity of aircraft accident investigation and are extremely hard to obtain during this pandemic. They provide a higher level of protection and are only to be used for mission critical aircraft accident investigation activities. The P100 particulate filtering facepiece respirator filters at least 99.97% of airborne particles and is strongly resistant to oil (the P stands for oil-proof).

Picture of the P100 respirator that is issued in mission critical go-kits:



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4. Can employees use other items (besides the respirators) in the aircraft accident go-kits for surveillance activities or office activities?

No. These hard to obtain items in the go-kits are for the mission critical activity of aircraft accident investigation. For example, the nitrile exam gloves, the sanitizing wipes, and the disposable coveralls are items needed for aircraft accident investigation. Our partners at Federal Occupational Health are also having a hard time finding these products.

5. What is the rationale for an operator asking me to wear a surgical mask?

The knowledge regarding COVID-19 is rapidly expanding, and operators are incorporating practices regarding personal protective equipment and viral transmission. Wearing a surgical mask will:

1. Act as a barrier to help prevent touching your face, if your hands have become contaminated; and
2. Protect their visitors and employees should anyone have early COVID-19 infection or develop symptoms at work. A mask achieves source control and decreases the risk of spreading infection by keeping droplets controlled. This assumes employees are not at work while symptomatic. The surgical masks benefits others from the asymptomatic carrier who may be shedding virus that can infect others.

6. I am at an external industry workplace (e.g. repair station), and my point of contact tells me I have to wear a mask for the protection of their employees. What masks/respirators can I wear per OSHA regulations?

Please see question and answer above regarding the difference between surgical/medical masks and the N95 respirators.

If the operator wants you to wear the surgical mask, anyone can wear a surgical mask without additional actions.

If the operator wants you to wear a N95 respirator (usually stamped with NIOSH N95 on it), you cannot wear it without a respirator medical clearance. Please see question number seven below for how to become medically cleared to wear an N95.

- If you are on accident duty and you have received training, fit testing, and medical clearance, you can wear the N95.
- If you are not on accident duty and you have not received medical clearance, you must disengage and contact your manager/supervisor. The N95 and other filtering facepiece respirators can place a physiological burden on employees that varies with the type of respirator worn, the job and workplace conditions in which the respirator is used, and the medical status of the employee under normal conditions.

7. If I haven't been medically cleared to wear a respirator and the operator wants me to wear a N95 respirator, what should I do?

Send an email to the FS OSH Mailbox: 9-NATL-AVS-AFS-OSH@faa.gov requesting access to the medical clearance database and instructions for completing the online medical questionnaire. In the email, provide your name, your Windows Username/Outlook name, and your region.

Upon reply, you will receive an email with the link and instructions for completing the online medical questionnaire. You must be honest and the answers are confidential between you and the healthcare professionals at Federal Occupational Health (US Public Health Service). You will receive a notification that indicates clearance or restrictions for wearing filtering facepieces or you will receive email from physician or nurse for follow-up. If they request follow-up, please contact them promptly. For further information on the medical clearance process, please see the [FS OSH Job Aid](#).

8. Is there general guidance for FS personnel that outlines precautions for staying healthy while conducting site visits during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes, please see Attachment A to this FAQ for detailed guidance on conducting surveillance and other activities at aviation operators during this pandemic.

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ATTACHMENT A.

**Conducting Field Site Visits during the COVID-19 Outbreak:
Guidance for Aviation Safety Professionals**

Aviation Safety Professionals may continue to conduct field site visits and inspections to protect the National Airspace System (NAS). This guidance will assist field staff / Aviation Safety Professionals (Aviation Safety Inspectors, Aviation Safety Technicians, and other accompanying FAA employees) in preparing for and conducting field site visits.

Inform your certificate holder about precautionary measures and alternatives

- ✓ Before conducting any field visit, you should contact the facility to discuss the need for the inspection and site visit. Ask the facility to limit the number of people at the site, if possible. Ask them to call and cancel the appointment if they or any other employees are having any of following symptoms: fever, coughing, or difficulty breathing. Assure them that you will do the same.
- ✓ Let your certificate holder know that you are taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Let them know that you are washing your hands frequently, social distancing, sanitizing equipment routinely, and are very aware of your possible impact on others.
- ✓ If anything concerns you during an inspection, remove yourself from the area and call your supervisor. If you encounter workers or members of the public who appear ill, you can discontinue an inspection at any time. If you feel unsafe about conducting field visits for any reason, talk to your supervisor.
- ✓ Ask if the certificate holder has any underlying health conditions noted by the CDC, then you may want to reschedule. Consider alternate inspection methods such as phone interviews, sending records, FaceTime, Zoom, etc.

Unscheduled site visits

- ✓ Do not conduct unscheduled field visits unless necessary. For those companies that are operating as normal, unscheduled visits may be appropriate.
- ✓ Consider the sensitivity of unscheduled site visits/inspections. If a facility is not comfortable with an inspection during this time, re-evaluate the necessity of completing the inspection. If there is a significant risk to public health or an immediate business need, take measures to reduce the risk of transmission, and the facility should be reminded of the requirements of licensure to operate.

Timing of inspections

- ✓ Before conducting any field visit, determine if the visit is necessary for efforts to protect public health or safety or if it can be delayed. You may want to avoid high-impact counties unless the inspection is critical to public health, safety, or business continuity. Take into consideration the guidelines from your state municipalities and any statewide mandates that close non-essential businesses.
- ✓ You may be delayed in conducting site visits due to circumstances beyond your control due to closures, transportation issues, or travel restrictions.
- ✓ Consider if a face-to-face visit is necessary. If there is an alternate way to conduct inspections besides a site visit, you should explore that option. It could involve a phone interview, sending documents for inspectors to review, or a video chat of the facility. It may be possible to gather the information by asking for a picture or video of facilities or logbooks.

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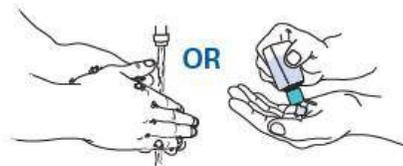
Other considerations

Be aware that operators will likely have questions and concerns. Limit conversations to topics allowed, such as cleaning procedures, social distancing, personal hygiene, and other methods of prevention and reduction of transmission.

- Do not speculate on what restrictions may come next, and do not make any promises to certificate holder.

Take the following steps to protect yourself and others during field activities.

- **Social Distancing/Physical Distancing.** During the field visit continue to practice social distancing, including:
 - No handshakes,
 - Avoid sharing equipment,
 - Limit the number of people in attendance, only essential staff necessary,
 - Maintain at least 6 feet distance between yourself and others, when possible.
 - Enter small areas alone, such as walk-in storage areas or other small closed in areas, and discuss any finding in open areas.
- **Practice proper hand hygiene** by promptly washing or sanitizing hands after coughing, sneezing, or physically interacting with others. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Also, wash or sanitize hands throughout the day as needed.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze. Make sure to dispose of the tissue immediately. Wash your hands with soap immediately after sneezing or coughing.
 - Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, and mouth).
 - Avoid touching unnecessary surfaces.
 - Wash your hands if you forget and touch a person, surface, or your face.
 - Wash your hands routinely at each site and after touching any potentially contaminated surfaces and at the beginning, during, and end of an inspection. If handwashing facilities are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
 - Wash or sanitize your hands upon arrival and departure after touching frequently touched surfaces such as door handles.
 - Keep disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer in an easily accessible place while on-inspection and/or site visits. The microbes are killed once hands are dry.



WASH HANDS OR USE AN ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER

- Consider sanitizing items you frequently touch like:
 - Phone
 - Laptop
 - Clipboard
 - GOV vehicle car equipment
 - Steering wheel
 - Gear shift
 - Door handles and edges

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If an FS employee starts to experience symptoms before an inspection, the site visit must be cancelled and notify your supervisor.

If you have a fever, cough, and difficulty breathing, seek medical care immediately.

If an FS employee starts to experience symptoms during or after inspection, he/she must notify their manager. The manager/supervisor will follow the processes and procedures outlined on the COVID-19 website: <https://my.faa.gov/site/news/COVID-19.html>

The COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions Website is also a great resource for virus related questions: <https://my.faa.gov/site/news/COVID-19/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions.html>.