

**Focus on...**

## Protecting Health Care Workers from Disease



Health care workers often have close and prolonged contact with patients infected with the flu, tuberculosis, meningitis and other serious infectious diseases. During outbreaks of H1N1 influenza or other novel pathogens, health care workers are particularly at risk of infection. Staff in health care workplaces must be trained and equipped to protect themselves and prevent the spread of these diseases.

When health care workers can't avoid exposure, using respiratory protection is an important component of an effective infection control program.

A respirator will not protect workers, however, if employers choose the wrong type of respirator, provide a respirator that doesn't fit, or allow respirators to be used improperly.

To help improve infection control and respiratory protection programs, the [Occupational Health Branch \(OHB\)](#) worked with the [NIOSH National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory](#) and health care partners to create a toolkit.

OHB's [Respirator Program Toolkit](#) provides California hospital and health care respirator program administrators with tools and resources to use respirators effectively and meet Cal/OSHA requirements for reducing exposure to infectious diseases. The toolkit includes a [program guide](#), [template](#), and [evaluation checklist](#). One hard-copy toolkit binder per California hospital is available on request by providing mailing and email contact information to [resp@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:resp@cdph.ca.gov).

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### Resources

[Respirator Program Toolkit](#)

[Respirator use in health care workplaces](#)

[Respiratory protection resources for health care](#)

[General respiratory protection resources](#)

[OHB](#) improves California worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, test new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and help make changes at the workplace.

Email [OHW@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback about this update or change of address.

