



## ILA-USMX JOINT SAFETY COMMITTEE

# OSH ALERT 2020-10 [13 April 2020]

## **In the Covid-19 Environment, Properly Removing & Disposing of Your Respiratory PPE is Important!**

Different germs and viruses can survive on a used mask for different periods of time. Experts feel that some viruses, when left exposed, can survive between a few hours and a few days. The **ILA~USMX JSC** requests that workers and employees not dispose of their used masks indiscriminately, as they can pose a potential health hazard to those who come in contact with them. Infected masks have respiratory secretions on them and can be dispersed and transmitted through the air. So, please be sensitive and respect yourselves and your fellow workers. Always wash your hands before and after taking off a mask. Employers should also be sensitive to providing adequate hand washing or disinfection alternatives for that purpose.

- **Cloth masks (Wash)** – Should be properly washed and left to hang/air dry.
- **Surgical masks (Fold, tie, wrap)** – Should be removed chin upwards, taking care to remove them using the ear loops/ strings. Be careful not to touch the front portion while taking off the mask. After taking the mask off, please fold it in half (inwards), such that droplets that have come from the mouth and nose are not exposed. Then, fold the mask into another half... until it looks like a roll. The mask can also be wrapped with its ear loops/strings, so that it will not unravel. Then, immediately discard the masks in a properly designated trash receptacle.
- **N95 respirator** – When removing the respirator, hold the edge of the straps attached to the N95 facepiece. Don't touch the inside part of the respirator. Gently remove the mask so as not to spread contaminants on the mask. Place the mask in a plastic or zip-lock bag. You can also store them in a breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. Secure the bag tightly. Place the plastic bag into a properly designated trash receptacle. Never put on a new mask until you have washed or sanitized your hands.

**Please Respect Yourself and Each Other: Do Not Litter**

Got a question about this particular subject? Write to the JSC at: [blueoceana@optonline.net](mailto:blueoceana@optonline.net)

**Working Together For The Benefit Of All**

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