Overview

This job tool describes the process for establishing a health screening process for all clients, workforce, and other individuals before they enter a shelter facility in a COVID-19 environment. It includes guidance for using personal protective equipment (PPE), operating a health screening area, order of preference for screening, and health screening procedures. Use this guidance with the Sheltering in COVID-19 Affected Areas job tool.

- In a COVID-19 environment, all staff, clients, and visitors must go through a health screening area before entering a Red Cross congregate shelter.
- All Red Cross workers who conduct health screening must understand how to conduct health screening and use PPE. Screening may be conducted by Mass Care workers under the supervision of Public Health or Disaster Health Services.
- Based on health screening results, clients will be directed to a dormitory or isolation care area. Those directed to the isolation care area receive further evaluation.
- The Shelter Site Manager is accountable for ensuring the procedures are followed for health screening in COVID-19 shelters.

Using Personal Protective Equipment

Sourcing

Once established, a DRO is resourced to conduct shelter operations, including health screening, based on planning assumptions. Ideally, government partners support some or all of the health screening and PPE requirements at Red Cross shelters. When the Red Cross conducts health screening at a shelter, the DRO requests:

- Personal protective equipment from local government;
- Training and fit testing from public health departments and/or appropriate emergency management consistent with OSHA standards.

If government is unable to provide PPE and/or training, the region/DRO proceeds follows the procedures in this job tool and the DCS COVID-19 Compendium. If a Regional Disaster Officer (RDO) or DRO Director believes the available workforce cannot operate safely, they notify division staff and/or national headquarters immediately.

What to Wear

Health screeners must wear FDA- or OSHA-compliant nitrile gloves, N95 masks, gowns, and goggles/eye protection.

PPE: Training, goggles or face shield, mask, gloves and gown

- Nitrile Gloves are a form of synthetic rubber with an unusually high resistance to fluids and come in several sizes. They are superior to latex gloves because they are non-allergenic.
- A N95 mask covers the nose and mouth and is a tight-fitting, air-purifying respirator using the whole facepiece functions as the filter. They may have an exhalation valve to help exhalation, but do *not* protect against gases or vapors. They must be fit-tested. See *Fit Testing* section below for more information.
    - For more information about use of N95 masks and respiratory protection, please refer to *How to Properly Put on and Take Off a Disposable Respirator* and *Filtering Out Confusion: Frequently Asked Questions about Respiratory Protection.*
    - Both are found at the end of this document and should be printed out and posted in the health screeners' changing room or area.

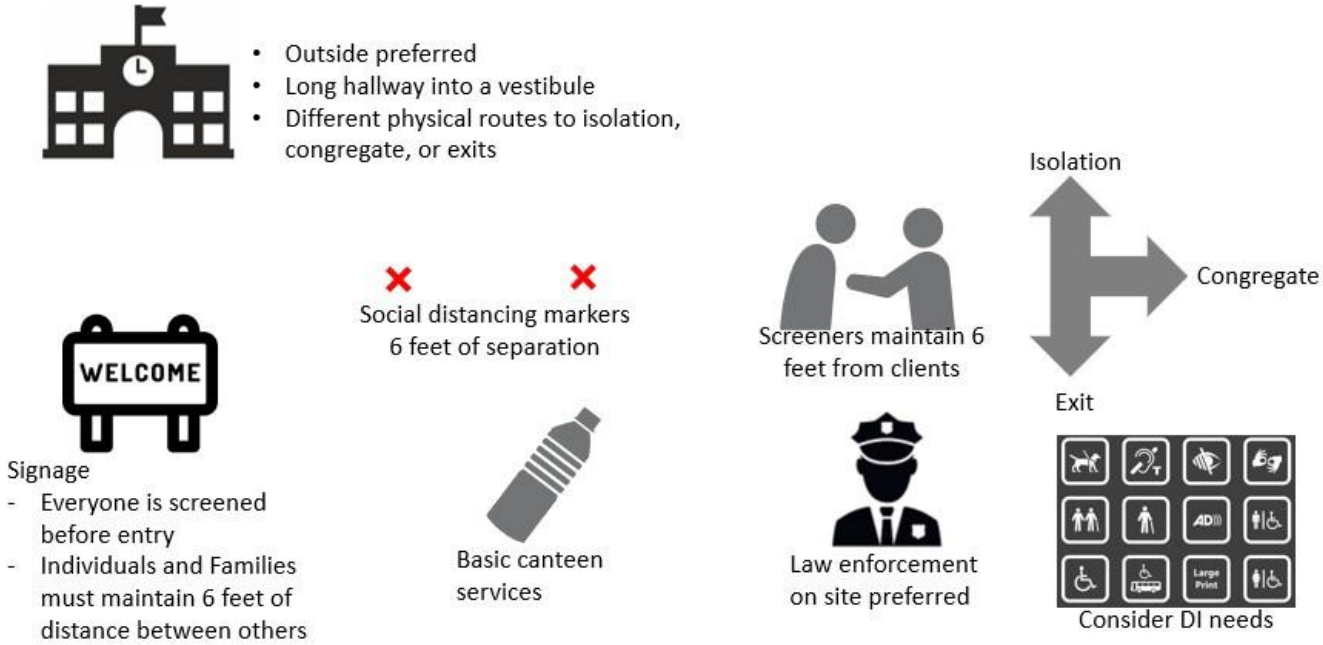
Fit Testing (Order of Preference)

1. Provided by state and local public health departments, emergency management, or fire departments consistent with OSHA standards
2. Provided by outsourced provider of fit testing services
3. Performed by certified Red Cross trainers

How Long to Use a Mask

- Use one mask per shift unless the mask becomes soiled or saturated or the user experiences increased difficulty breathing through the device.
    - Health screening staff should minimize unnecessary contact with the respirator surface, strict adherence to hand hygiene practices is necessary, and the proper technique for putting on and taking off personal protective equipment.
- All N95 mask users must conduct a user self-test each time the mask is worn to ensure proper mask sealing.
- Wear gowns and googles or other form of eye protection such as sunglasses.

Operating a Health Screening Area



Preparing the Health Screening Area

1. Set up an area where people will be health screened before entering a shelter. Ideally, conduct screening outside to allow for social distancing and maximize airflow. If inside, the screening area should have:

    - A hallway that supports social distancing and markers;
    - A post-screening area that provides separate routes to the isolation care area, congregate sheltering, and an exit.

2. Post signs that say: “ALL individuals entering shelter MUST be health screened. Family units or individuals MUST maintain 6-foot distance from others.” Place signage before entry to the screening line in English and Spanish.

3. Shelter Site Manager decides whether to use security/ law enforcement to maintain order and compliance with screening process.

4. Shelter Site Manager ensures appropriate accommodations are provided for those with access and functional needs.

5. Reserve a space near the health screening area where screeners to put on, take off, store, and dispose of personal protective equipment. Illustrations of sample inside and outside health screening areas can be found at the end of this job tool.

6. Staff the health screening area. See the *Order of Preference for Health Screening Staff* below. The number of health screeners is dependent on the number of people in the health screening line, but at least one person always staffs the health screening area.

7. Provide basic canteen services, including water and snacks. See the Feeding in COVID Congregate Shelters job tool for information on how to do this safely.

8. Health screeners wipe down and disinfect all surfaces, including coolers, chairs, and tables regularly, including before health screening opens, every hour while open, and after it closes.

Order of Preference for Health Screening Staff

1. Public health personnel using their own personal protective equipment;
2. Emergency Management Technicians (EMT), military, or private health care professionals using their own personal protective equipment;
3. Red Cross workers who have been provided training and PPE by public health/government;
4. Red Cross workers who have been provided with training and PPE by the Red Cross.

Health Screening Procedures

- All health screeners don nitrile gloves, an N-95 mask, gown, and goggles/eye protection before entering the screening area.

- Health screeners, family units, and individuals must maintain social distancing (6 feet) as indicated by visual markers, like tape, cones, or rope.

Health Screening for Each Person		
1	Throughout process, assess client for coughing or other symptoms.	If symptomatic, offer client a dust mask and send client to the isolation care area.
2	Ask the following questions: • *Do you or anyone in your household currently have a cough, fever, or any type of respiratory illness?* • *Have you or anyone in your household been in close contact with anyone who has been confirmed as having COVID-19?* • *Are you or anyone in your household a health care worker caring for a confirmed COVID-19 patient?*	If YES to any question, send client to isolation care area. If NO to all, proceed to step 2.
3	Take the client's temperature using a digital or other type of appropriate thermometer.	If temperature is 99.5 F or higher send client to the isolation care area.

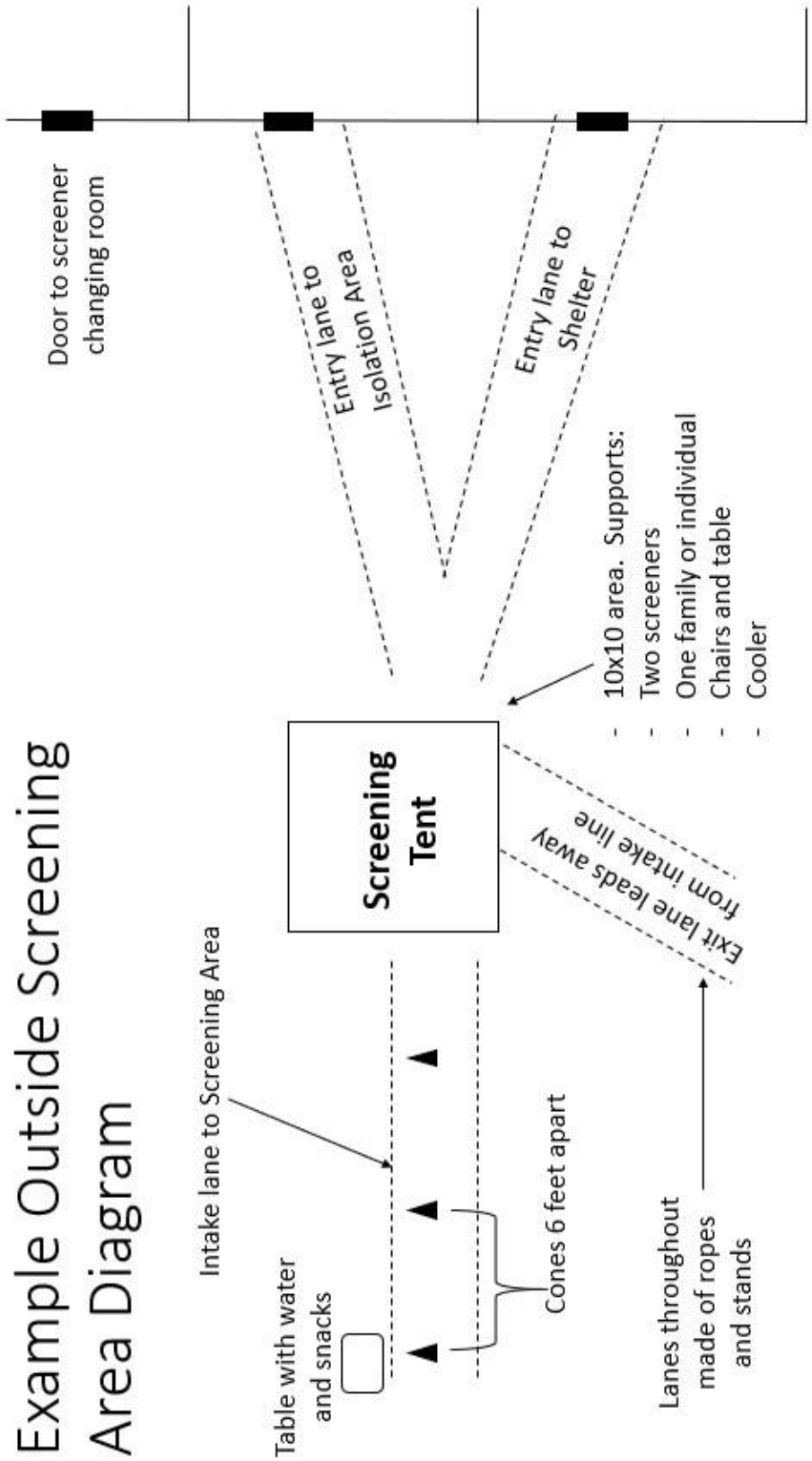
- Based on health screening, all are directed to dormitory area or isolation care area. Those going to the isolation care area receive further evaluation.

- Screeners remove their personal protective equipment before exiting the screening area.

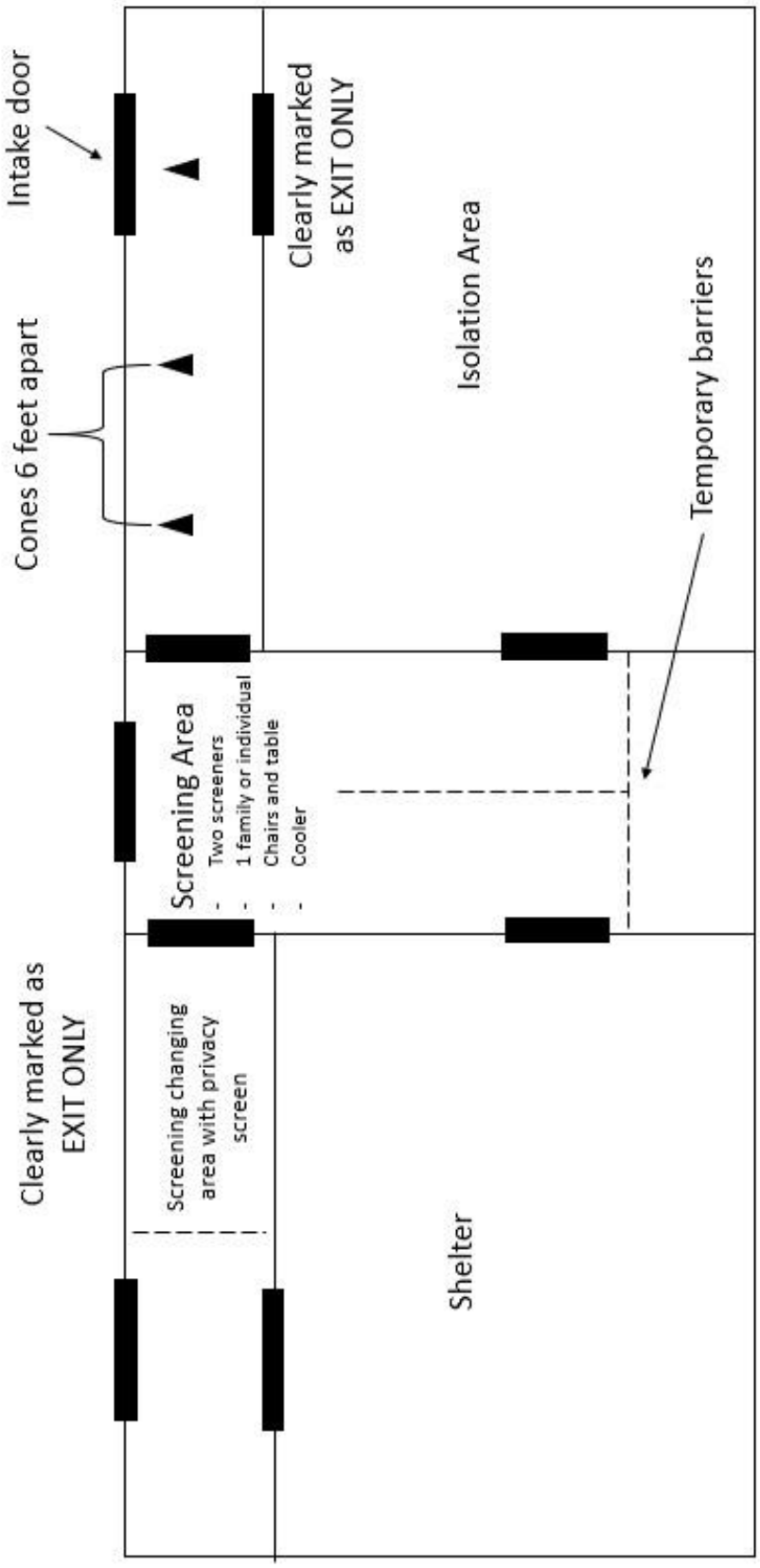
Related Resources

- COVID-19 DCS Mission Decision Matrix
- Conversations with Local Public Health and Emergency Management
- Guidelines for DAT and DRO Workers to Reduce Risk of COVID-19 Transmission
- Sheltering in COVID-19 Affected Areas
- Isolation Care Areas for Clients and Staff During Disasters Job Tool
- COVID-19 DCS Operational Toolkit
- DCS COVID-19 Compendium

Example Outside Screening Area Diagram



Example Inside Screening Area Diagram



How to Properly Put on and Take off a Disposable Respirator

WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY BEFORE PUTTING ON AND TAKING OFF THE RESPIRATOR.

If you have used a respirator before that fit you, use the same make, model and size.

Inspect the respirator for damage. If your respirator appears damaged, DO NOT USE IT. Replace it with a new one.

Do not allow facial hair, hair, jewelry, glasses, clothing, or anything else to prevent proper placement or come between your face and the respirator.

Follow the instructions that come with your respirator.[1]

Putting On The Respirator

Position the respirator in your hands with the nose piece at your fingertips.

Cup the respirator in your hand allowing the headbands to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator under your chin with the nosepiece up.

The top strap (on single or double strap respirators) goes over and rests at the top back of your head. The bottom strap is positioned around the neck and below the ears. Do not crisscross straps.

Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nose clip (if present). Slide fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to mold the nose area to the shape of your nose.

Checking Your Seal[2]

Place both hands over the respirator, take a quick breath in to check whether the respirator seals tightly to the face.

Place both hands completely over the respirator and exhale. If you feel leakage, there is not a proper seal.

If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nosepiece as described. If air leaks at the mask edges, re-adjust the straps along the sides of your head until a proper seal is achieved.

If you cannot achieve a proper seal due to air leakage, ask for help or try a different size or model.

Removing Your Respirator

DO NOT TOUCH the front of the respirator! It may be contaminated!

Remove by pulling the bottom strap over back of head, followed by the top strap, without touching the respirator.

Discard in waste container. WASH YOUR HANDS!

Employers must comply with the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard, 29 CFR 1910.134 if respirators are used by employees performing work-related duties.

1 Manufacturer instructions for many NIOSH approved disposable respirators can be found at www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/

2 According to the manufacturer's recommendations

For more information call 1-800-CDC-INFO or go to http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/

CS 207843
DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2010-133

Filtering out Confusion: Frequently Asked Questions about Respiratory Protection

User Seal Check

Over 3 million United States employees in approximately 1.3 million workplaces are required to wear respiratory protection. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (29 CFR 1910.134) requires an annual fit test to confirm the fit of any respirator that forms a tight seal on the wearer's face before it is used in the workplace.[1] Once a fit test has been done to determine the best respirator model and size for a particular user, **a user seal check** should be done every time the respirator is to be worn to ensure an adequate seal is achieved.

What is a User Seal Check?

A user seal check is a procedure conducted by the respirator wearer to determine if the respirator is being properly worn. The user seal check can either be a positive pressure or negative pressure check.

During a **positive pressure user seal check**, the respirator user **exhales** gently while blocking the paths for air to exit the facepiece. A successful check is when the facepiece is slightly pressurized before increased pressure causes outward leakage.

During a **negative pressure user seal check**, the respirator user **inhales** sharply while blocking the paths for air to enter the facepiece. A successful check is when the facepiece collapses slightly under the negative pressure that is created with this procedure.

A user seal check is sometimes referred to as a fit check. A user seal check should be completed each time the respirator is donned (put on). It is only applicable when a respirator has already been successfully fit tested on the individual.

How do I do a User Seal Check while Wearing a Filtering Facepiece Respirator?

Not every respirator can be checked using both positive and negative pressure. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions for conducting user seal checks on any specific respirator. This information can be found on the box or individual respirator packaging.

The following positive and negative user seal check procedures for filtering facepiece respirators are provided as examples of how to perform these procedures.

How to do a positive pressure user seal check

Once the particulate respirator is properly donned, place your hands over the facepiece, covering as much surface area as possible. Exhale gently into the facepiece. The face fit is considered satisfactory if a slight positive pressure is being built up inside the facepiece without any evidence of outward leakage of air at the seal. Examples of such evidence would be the feeling of air movement on your face along the seal of the facepiece, fogging of your glasses, or a lack of pressure being built up inside the facepiece.

If the particulate respirator has an exhalation valve, then performing a positive pressure check may be impossible. In such cases, a negative pressure check should be performed.

How to do a negative pressure user seal check

Negative pressure seal checks are typically conducted on particulate respirators that have exhalation valves. To conduct a negative pressure user seal check, cover the filter surface with your hands as much as possible and then inhale. The facepiece should collapse on your face and you should not feel air passing between your face and the facepiece.

In the case of either type of seal check, if air leaks around the nose, use both hands to readjust the nosepiece by placing your fingertips at the top of the metal nose clip. Slide your fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to more efficiently mold the nose area to the shape of your nose. Readjust the straps along the sides of your head until a proper seal is achieved.[2]

If you cannot achieve a proper seal due to air leakage, you may need to be fit tested for a different respirator model or size.

Can a user seal check be considered a substitute for a fit testing?

No. The user seal check does not have the sensitivity and specificity to replace either fit test methods, qualitative or quantitative, that are accepted by OSHA (29 CFR 1910.134). A user should only wear respirator models with which they have achieved a successful fit test within the last year. NIOSH data suggests that the added care from performing a user seal check leads to higher quality donnings (e.g., reduces the chances of a donning with a poor fit).[3]

Where can I Find More Information?

This information and more is available on the NIOSH Respirator Trusted-Source webpage.

References

1. OSHA [1998]. Respiratory Protection. 29 CFR 1910.134. Final rule. Fed Regist 63:1152-1300.
2. NIOSH [2010]. How to properly put on and take off a disposable respirator. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2010-133 https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-133/pdfs/2010-133.pdf.
3. Viscusi DJ, Bergman MS, Zhuang Z, and Shaffer RE [2012]. Evaluation of the benefits of the user seal check on N95 filtering facepiece respirator fit. J Occup and Environ Hyg. 9(6):408-416.

Photos courtesy of NIOSH

This document is in the public domain and may be freely copied or reprinted.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.26616/NIOSHPUB2018130

DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 2018-130

To receive NIOSH documents or more information about occupational safety and health topics, please contact NIOSH:
Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) TTY: 1-888-232-6348 CDC INFO: www.cdc.gov/info or visit the NIOSH Web site at www.cdc.gov/NIOSH.
For a monthly update on news at NIOSH, subscribe to NIOSH eNews by visiting www.cdc.gov/niosh/eNews.