



# HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDER

**To:** All Officers and Members  
**From:** Matthew White, Assistant Fire Chief *MW*  
**Through:** Justin Wells, Executive Assistant Fire Chief *JW*  
**Subject:** N95 Collection Process for Battelle System  
**Date:** June 15, 2020

**Mayor**  
Sylvester Turner

**City Council**

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**District B**  
Jerry Davis

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**At-Large 2**  
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**At-Large 3**  
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**At-Large 4**  
Letitia Plummer

**At-Large 5**  
Sallie Alcorn

**Controller,**  
Chris Brown

Considering the possibility of a PPE Supply Chain interruption or shortage, HFD Memorandum 20-126 (April 9, 2020) implemented Reuse of N95 Respirators as recommended by the CDC.

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html> The 'N95 Reuse' Guideline remains in place and should continue to be followed.

In addition to the 'N95 Reuse' practice, beginning on June 15, 2020 HFD will also begin to utilize the Battelle (CCDS) Critical Care Decontamination System for N95 masks or approved equivalents.

<https://www.battelle.org/inb/battelle-critical-care-decontamination-system-for-covid19>

The process uses Vaporized Hydrogen Peroxide (VHP) and is FDA approved:

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-regulatory-science/investigating-decontamination-and-reuse-respirators-public-health-emergencies>

The Battelle System is already in use by several local agencies and major Fire Departments. It has been tested by Texas A&M with a result of 100% disinfection.

The N95 Respirators collected, cleaned and disinfected by the Battelle System will only be utilized in the case of complete inaccessibility to new N95 Respirators due to a supply chain interruption or shortage. HFD will stockpile the cleaned/disinfected N95s for use until normal supply chain function returns.

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**Samuel Peña, Fire Chief**  
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The procedure for placing a qualified N95 Respirator into the Battelle System can be found in video form at [www.hfdmd.org](http://www.hfdmd.org) and included in this order.

Members must determine if an N95 Respirator should be reused, discarded, or placed into the Battelle System to be disinfected.

1. At the beginning of each shift, members will place the HFD ID number **P38** on the bottom right of the N95 Respirator (as it is looked at) of any new N95 they use.
2. Once an N95 Respirator is determined to no longer be eligible for reuse per Memorandum 20-126, (proximity to COVID patient, aerosol generating treatments, etc.) the mask should be inspected and the decision to discard the mask or place it into the Battelle System should be made.
3. If the N95 Respirator has visible contamination or soiling such as blood, vomit, dirt or if it is physically damaged, worn or torn, it should be discarded as with other medical waste. If the N95 Respirator is otherwise unsoiled or damaged, it is a candidate to be placed into the apparatus collection bin for the Battelle System.
4. Masks containing cellulose such as KN95s **are not** candidates for the Battelle System process. (KN95s can usually be identified by having ear loops and not head bands.)
5. Once the provided N95 collection bin on the apparatus is full, the bag will be properly sealed with duct tape and transferred to the provided blue station bin labeled **N95 Masks Only**.
6. EMS Supply will collect the N95 Masks Only blue station bins weekly. In the event the station bin becomes full prior to the weekly pickup, members can call EMS Supply at (832) 395-8505 to request a pickup.

The system and process are further explained in the [www.hfdmd.org](http://www.hfdmd.org) video covering the N95 Collection Process for Battelle System and also at [www.battelle.org](http://www.battelle.org) .

Any questions about the Battelle System process will be addressed through the chain of command.



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