Guidelines for N95 mask reuse:

Based on CDC guidance, N95’s can be used for up to five donnings unless manufacturers label explicitly states another number or damaged/difficult to breathe through.

**Recommended reuse method:** each individual is assigned four masks which they rotate through each day while allowing the mask to dry out for 3-4 days.

- Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures.
- Discard N95 respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- Discard N95 respirators following close contact with, or exit from, the care area of any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.
- Consider use of a cleanable face shield over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients, use of engineering controls) to reduce surface contamination.
- Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).

NIOSH and CALOSHA guidelines allow surgical masks to be used for lower hazard tasks involving patient contact when there is a shortage of N95s. However, surgical masks may not be used during high hazard (aerosol generating) procedures or nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swab specimens.

- Allows for same respirator for multiple patient encounters.
- OSHA guidelines state that extended use of N95s is preferred over reuse due to contact transmission risk associated with donning/doffing during reuse.
- When respirators are being re-used, employers should pay particular attention to workers’ proper storage (e.g. paper bag with small holes) of the N95s between periods of use.

In the event extended use or reuse of N95s becomes necessary, the same worker is permitted to extend use of or reuse the respirator, as long as the respirator maintains its structural and functional integrity and the filter material is not physically damaged, soiled, or contaminated (e.g., with blood, oil, paint, etc.). Employers must address in their written Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) the circumstances under which a disposable respirator will be considered...
contaminated and not available for extended use or reuse. Users should perform a user seal check each time they don a respirator and should not use a respirator on which they cannot perform a successful user seal check.

If reuse of respirators is necessary, an appropriate sequence for donning/doffing procedures should be used to prevent contamination, and training needs to address appropriate donning/doffing procedures. See

www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/PPE-Sequence-508.pdf

References:

- https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html
- https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/respsource1quest3.html#half
- https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html