



VOLUNTARY USE OF FILTERING FACEPIECE RESPIRATORS (DUST MASKS)

Toolbox Talks for the members of Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

April 2016

According to OSHA, filtering facepieces are true respirators but are only effective against particulates. Particulates are material particles and include dust, mists, and spray. Odors may still be noted when using this respirator because it does not filter out gases or vapors. These types of respirators are disposable, meaning that they cannot be cleaned. They may also have an exhalation valve but this does not change the protection value of the facepiece. Always store new respirators in the original container so that they are protected from sunlight, moisture, chemicals, water and physical damage.

Voluntary use is defined as use for employee comfort only. These types of respirators are not to be worn oxygen-deficient or IDLH atmospheres. No respiratory hazard must exist that requires that use of a respirator and the use of this dust mask does not produce any additional hazard for the employee. If any employee exposure to a respiratory hazard exists, a full respiratory protection program overseen by a qualified administrator is required.

OSHA requires that all employees voluntarily wearing filtering facepiece respirators receive basic information on respirators as provided in Appendix D of the Respiratory Protection standard, 29 CFR 1910.134.



Left:

Disposable 2
Strap Dust
Mask With
Exhalation
Valve

Right:

Disposable 2
Strap Dust
Mask

How to Properly Wear and Fit Your Dust Mask

Make sure that your hands and face are clean and that you have inspected the respirator for damage. Hold the dust mask in your hand with the narrow end (nose contour) at your fingertips, allowing the head straps to fall below the hand.



Place the respirator under the chin with nose contour up. Cup the respirator in your hand allowing the head straps to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator under your chin with the nosepiece up.



Pull the shorter bottom strap over the head, below the ears, to around the neck. The top strap goes over the head and rests at the top back of your head. Do not crisscross the straps.



Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nose clip. Slide the fingertips down both sides of the metal strip to mold the nose area to the shape of your nose. To check the fit, cup both hands over the respirator and exhale deeply. If air leaks at respirator edges, pull the straps to adjust and retest.



OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard, 29 CFR 1910.134

Appendix D to Section 1910.134 (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substances does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

Employee Name & Signature _____

Trainer's Name & Signature _____

Date Training Conducted _____

***This document is to be used to address the voluntary use of filtering facepiece respirators (dust masks) for nuisance particulates only.*