

Voluntary Use of Filter-type Respirator Guidelines (Cal-OSHA)

N95 or Other Tight-Fitting Respirators

Purpose & Application

Filter-type respirators (e.g., N95 or dust masks) can be offered to crew members on a production when a particulate or dust may become airborne, irritating, or is of concern to crew members. The filter-type respirator can be used voluntarily if appropriate and below regulatory exposure limits.

Contact your Production Safety Representative for a hazard assessment of your application and to ensure the appropriate respirator type is selected. Additional requirements are mandatory for other respirator types and uses. (e.g., organic vapor, air supply, chemical use) as may be needed for -painting, solvent use, or other hazards).

What is an N95 Respirator and Dust mask?

An N95 filtering face piece is an air-purifying type respirator certified by NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) to intercept and filter out particulate aerosols greater than 0.3 microns in diameter including general nuisance dust or particulates.

Production will only supply NIOSH Certified N95 respirators. A label stating NIOSH certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. An N95 provides a higher degree of protection against inhalation hazards if properly sized and fitted to the wearer's face. Some other non-N95 dust masks also provide filtration, but at a much lower efficiency.

[Understanding the Difference, Surgical Mask, N95 Respirator \(cdc.gov\)](#)

Medical

Cal OSHA and Federal OSHA do not require a comprehensive medical evaluation for voluntary use of filter-type respirators. However, it is important to advise that putting any device over breathing zone may make breathing more difficult for certain individuals with cardiovascular or respiratory conditions. Please consult your personal medical professional if you have concerns medically.

How do I request and use an N95 or alternative filter-type dust respirator?

Production can provide crew members with a NIOSH approved N95 or general dust mask-upon request.” Contact your Production Safety Representative if you desire to wear one to ensure a proper hazard assessment is completed.

After completing the training request below, submit the Form below (OSHA’s Voluntary Use Form-Appendix D) to your Production Coordinator and Production Safety Manager to receive further instructions and obtain your N95’s or other approved filtering respirator.

Voluntary users shall be properly informed of how to use the N95 prior to obtaining and using the respirator at work.

Please review manufacturer instructions and follow these three easy steps:

Step 1 – Complete Non-Mandatory Voluntary Use Form (Appendix D)

Bring a signed copy to your Production Coordinator. They will provide you with an approved N95.

Step 2 – Training Guidelines

For Proper inspection, sizing, putting on and taking off the N95 or your dust respirator, review, these 3 protocols

1. [OSHA 5- minute training video: \(60\) Putting on and taking off a Mask](#)
2. [Three Key Factors Required for a Respirator to be Effective Infographic \(cdc.gov\)](#)
3. [Using Disposable Respirators \(ca.gov\) how to effectively use and seal the respirator to your face.](#)
4. Demonstrate the proper use and ask any questions to your Production Safety representative.

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Step 3 – Limitations, Cleaning/Maintenance/Storage, Recordkeeping

- Limitations: Do not wear N95 in atmospheres containing contaminants which it is not designed to protect against. N95s will not effectively protect against gases, vapors, or small solid particles of fumes or smoke or oxygen-deficient environments. Review your manufacturer instructions on use, maintenance, cleaning, and care.
- Facial hair is generally not recommended with N95 use as they can compromise the seal formed by face-to-respirator contact. If you decide to ask for a voluntary use N95 and you intend to maintain keeping facial hair, be advised there will be no added benefit using an N95 over that of the company issued face covers.
- Replace N95 if they get damaged, deformed, dirty, or difficult to breathe through. The best practice is to replace filtering facepiece respirators at the beginning of each shift. CDC recommends replacing a disposable filtering facepiece respirator, such as an N95, after it has been taken on and off five times.
- Perform a seal-check every time that you put the respirator on as demonstrated in the training guidelines.
- The Production will document your training, fit, and provide you with instructions on maintaining and cleaning/disposal for the N95 or dust respirator.

For Additional Questions: Contact your Production Safety Manager.

Resources

[Cal-OSHA Fact Sheet - Voluntary Use of Respirators](#)

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Appendix D - Cal-OSHA Voluntary Use Acknowledgement Form

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 exposure to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance 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 comply with all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's 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 in atmospheres containing contaminants 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.

I have read the above information, and I understand the requirements regarding respirator use. If I have any questions now or in the future, I will contact my Health and Safety Manager or Production Safety Manager.

Print Name _____ Dept. / Production _____

Sign _____ Date _____

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