



N95 Respirator Use and Care Information

Purpose of a respirator is to protect your health but can only do so if used and cared for properly!

A disposable N95 is a filtering facepiece respirator (FFR), not a dust mask. N95 and other disposable respirators (e.g., P95, N100, P100) are tested and approved as respiratory protection by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and require medical clearance and annual fit testing for use.

Disposable respirators are used for protection against particulate hazards. **Common uses include welding fumes, infectious aerosols in healthcare or research labs, dust from sanding, and animal allergens.** N95 respirators do not protect against gases or vapors. These respirators may or may not have exhalation valves.

Disposable



These respirators are named based on efficiency and oil resistance of their filter material (e.g., N95 or P100). A P100 FFR respirator will filter out 99.97% of the particles 0.3 microns in size, and the filter is very resistant to oily mists. An N95 FFR respirator will remove 95% of 0.3 microns size particles, and should not be used for oily mists.

To provide proper protection, respirators must be selected on the basis of the potential airborne (inhalation) hazard. Your respirator is required due to one or more of the following:

- a supervisor expects staff to wear it,
- exposure levels to contaminants are above the allowable limits, or
- it is recommended in standard operating procedures (required by work protocols).

If respirator use is required, a written respiratory protection plan is necessary. Please contact your supervisors if you are unsure why you are being provided a respirator.

Respirators only work if they fit the wearer, are used only for task assigned, maintained and worn properly.

- An annual respirator fit test will determine the proper model and size that fits your face.
- The respirator should be inspected for any defects before use.
- A user seal check must be performed **EACH** time the respirator is put on to make sure it is adequately sealed.
- Use **only** the manufacturer, style, size respirator that you used during the fit test.
- No facial hair should be present where the respirator seals against your face.

A **user seal check** may be accomplished by using the procedures recommended by the manufacturer of the respirator. Not every respirator can be checked using both. Refer to the manufacturer's instructions for conducting user seal checks for your respirator.

An example of how to perform a user seal check:

Positive pressure seal check – Once the filtering facepiece is properly put on (donned), put 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 around the seal.

If the particulate respirator has an exhalation valve, then performing a positive pressure check may be impossible. If so, then do a negative pressure check.

Negative pressure seal check – Negative pressure seal checks are 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 slightly collapse on your face and you should not feel air passing between your face and the facepiece.

Placement:



Do not use filtering facepiece (ex. N95) when:

- There is not enough oxygen
- The air is very dangerous to your life or health
- For tasks other than assigned in written respirator program

If you are unsure whether a respirator is needed for the task, what respirator type or cartridge/filter to use, or have questions on proper use, contact your supervisor or Environmental and Occupational Health (eoh@fpm.wisc.edu).

How to Properly Put on and Take Off a Disposable Respirator: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-133/pdfs/2010-133.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH PUB2010133>

A helpful video on respirators can be found at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1yYmABesZE&context=C3c287b7AD0EgsToPDskKsuctdHm850ogCNblUXKj>