

University of Kansas
Department of Environment, Health & Safety

Respirator Protection Program

Mandatory Information for Individuals Using N95 Filtering Facepiece (dust mask) Respirators When Not Required by Regulation (Per OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix D)

N95 Filtering Facepiece (dust mask) Respirators are an effective method of protection against a variety of nuisance hazard particulates and dust when properly selected and worn. N95 respirator use, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, can provide an additional level of comfort and protection for individuals. However, if the N95 respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the individual.

Sometimes, individuals may wear N95 respirators to prevent/minimize exposures to nuisance level dust hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by applicable regulatory standards. If you are voluntarily using a disposable N95 Filtering facepiece (dust mask) type respirator provided by the department, or if you provide your own N95 respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You must do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the limitations of the N95 Filtering facepiece (dust mask) Respirator.
2. The N95 respirator must be 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. If you have any questions, check with supervisor or KU-EHS Dept.
3. Do not wear your N95 respirator into atmospheres that contain contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. An N95 Filtering facepiece (dust mask) respirator is designed to filter at least 95% of airborne nuisance dust, mists and particulates but is not resistant to oil and will not protect you against gases, vapors, asbestos, lead dust 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.

If you have any questions or concerns about respirators and your safety, check with supervisor or KU-EHS Dept.