



Dust Mask vs. Respirator

Dust masks can be worn for comfort against non-toxic nuisance dusts during activities like sweeping and dusting. These masks are not respirators and do not offer protection against hazardous dusts, gases or vapors.

Dust masks can be mistaken by NIOSH approved N-95 respirators. How can you tell the difference? Look for a NIOSH label printed on the box and/or mask. Also, the use of the word “respirator” on the box may indicate it it’s a NIOSH approved respirator.

Use a N-95 Respirators when you are grinding, sanding, sweeping, bagging, woodworking and when around other dusty applications. Also, maybe useful in a non-oil aerosol mist application.

Please note that if you are using N-95 respirators for nuisance dust we recommend you discontinue their use and switch to dust masks.

Using a Disposable

- Read and follow all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirator’s limitations.
- Choose respirators that are certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or fumes or smoke.
- Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

User Seal Check

Perform each time the respirator is donned and is intended to check the respirator-to-face seal. Place both hands over the entire respirator and exhaling normally. The respirator should expand slightly

- If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nosepiece.
- If air leaks at the respirator edges, work the straps back along the sides of your head.

While the standard does not ban beards per se, it does require employers to ensure that bearded employees who are required to wear tight-fitting facepieces trim their beards so that they do not interfere with the sealing surface of the respirator or are not so large that they could interfere with valve function.”

Dust "nuisance" mask:



Typical N95 Respirator:

Note the NIOSH label and two straps.

