

PPE: Filtering Face Pieces

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Filtering facepieces offer protection from dust, mist, and fumes in the user's breathing air. They do not provide protection against gases and vapors. If filtering facepieces require protective equipment, you must follow your workplace's respiratory protection program and its requirements for medical evaluations, fit testing, and training. If you choose to use a filtering facepiece in the workplace voluntarily, you must sign a Voluntary Respirator Use form as required by OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard.

Common Hazards That Require Filtering Facepieces

Workplace hazards, such as the ones below, that can't be addressed in another manner may require the use of filtering facepieces.

- Spraying or application of chemicals
- Exposure to aerosolized droplets of material
- Flying particles of dust, debris, or fumes
- Severe weather hazards, such as wildfire smoke

Selecting Filtering Facepieces

There are many different types of filtering facepieces. Use your facility's workplace hazard assessment to determine the appropriate kind of facepiece for your task. Choose a filtering facepiece that is:

- Made of appropriate materials to suit your task/hazards
- Appropriately sized for the employee
- Certified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

Class of Filtering Facepieces

- N95, N99, N100 Filters at least 95%, 99%, and 99.97% of airborne particles. Not resistant to oil.
- R95, R99, R100 Filters at least 95%, 99%, and 99.97% of airborne particles. Somewhat resistant to oil.
- P95, P99, and P100 Filters at least 95%, 99%, and 99.97% of airborne particles. Strongly resistant to oil.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Remember: Single-strap dust and surgical masks protect against "nuisance particles" — they do not have a protection factor and are not a substitute for a filtering facepiece.

Filtering Facepiece Best Practices

Filtering facepieces may be used in conjunction with other PPE to keep the user safe at work.

Filtering facepieces are disposable. Replace them when they have become contaminated or damaged.

- They are usually disposable and must be replaced when discolored, damaged, or clogged after each use.
- If used around splash hazards, they must be equipped with a liquid barrier (such as surgical facepieces or respirators).

Do not share facepieces with others.