



N-95 Respirator Basic Information

N-95 respirators are air-purifying respirators certified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to have a filter efficiency level of 95% or greater against particulate aerosols that are free of oil. NIOSH tests these units at 0.3 microns, as this is the most penetrating particle size to the deeper regions of the lungs.

N-95 respirators provide protection from particulates when properly fitted and worn. Examples of airborne contaminants that N-95 respirators filter out include dusts, fumes, mists, and certain microbial agents.

Respiratory Protection Program Requirements

The Ohio State University's Respiratory Protection Program requires that employees must complete the following steps prior to wearing a respirator:

1. **Medical clearance:** to determine if employee is physically able to wear a respirator, conducted by University Health Services
2. **Annual fit test:** to determine if the respirator fits properly on the user's face, conducted by EHS. (Fit tests are not necessary for voluntary respirator users)
3. **Annual training:** on the selection, use, storage, and limitations of the respirator used

Selecting a Respirator

Employees will only wear the same make, size, and model of N-95 respirator that they have been successfully fitted with during the annual fit test. This model will be chosen during the fit test, depending on facial structure and size.

Capabilities and Limitations

- N-95 respirators only filter out particulate contaminants
- N-95 respirators do not offer protection from chemical vapors/gases or oxygen-deficient atmospheres
- N-95 respirators are not to be worn by individuals with facial hair, as it can impact the seal to the user's face thus compromising the protection factor of the respirator

Inspection

Prior to wearing the N-95 respirator, inspect the equipment for damage and/or contamination. Verify all components of the respirator are in good condition (i.e., straps, nose piece, etc.).

Effective Use of N-95 Respirators

To ensure N-95 respirators work effectively:

1. Only use the respirator make, size, and model for which you have been fit tested for. N-95 respirators vary by model and size. Improper fit will likely result in inadequate protection.
2. Do not use the respirator with facial hair, which may interfere with the direct contact between your face and the sealing surface of the respirator.
3. Conduct a seal check each time you put the respirator on (see back instructions).
4. If respirator becomes damaged, soiled, or you experience problems while wearing the respirator, leave the work area immediately and remove the respirator when you are no longer exposed to potential airborne hazards. Inform your supervisor about the issue.

How to Wear a N-95 Respirator



Position the respirator in your hands with the nose piece at your fingertips.



Cup the respirator in your hand allowing the headbands to hang below your hand. Hold the respirator with the nosepiece up.



The top strap goes over and rests at the crown of your head. The bottom strap rests around the neck and below the ears.



Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nosepiece. Slide fingertips down both sides and mold the piece to your nose.



Place both hands over mask, take a quick breath in to check whether the mask seals tightly to the face.



Place both hands completely over the respirator and exhale. If you feel a leak, there is not a proper seal.



If air leaks around the nose, readjust the nosepiece. If air leaks at the mask edges, re-adjust straps along the sides of your head.



If you cannot achieve a proper seal due to air leakage, ask for help or try a different size or model.



DO NOT TOUCH the front of the respirator. It may be contaminated.



Remove by pulling the bottom strap over back of head, followed by the top strap, without touching the mask.



Discard in garbage and wash your hands.

Further Questions

If you have any further questions relating to the N-95 respirator, please contact EHS during your annual fit test or at your convenience.