

Voluntary Use Requirements for Filtering Facepiece Respirators (N95s)

Please refer to [UCSB COVID-19 Information Website](https://www.ucsb.edu/COVID-19-information/campus-updates) for information on N95 availability and campus masking requirements (<https://www.ucsb.edu/COVID-19-information/campus-updates>).

All employees who will wear respirators on a voluntary basis must read the information below and sign the consent form on the last page of this document. Please contact the UCSB Respiratory Protection Program (rpp@ucsb.edu) with any questions or concerns.

Section 5144 Appendix D: (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard. You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, user seal checks, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations. Medical clearances and respirator fit-testing is not required for voluntary use of filtering face piece respirators.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. For protection against COVID-19 bioaerosols, a NIOSH certified filtering facepiece respirator such as an N95 is typically sufficient. 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.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designated to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors 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.

How to properly put on, size, fit, use, and maintain respirators.

To get the most protection from a respirator, there must be a tight seal around the face. A respirator will provide much less protection if facial hair interferes with the seal. A properly sized filtering facepiece respirator should cover the users face from the top of the nose to just below the chin as shown in the drawing on the next page. If there is inadequate coverage or the mask interferes with the user's ability to wear required eye protection or work safely, a different size or model of mask must be chosen. A video showing proper use can be viewed here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/uc.wildfire/n95use>. To ensure proper fit and use please do the following:

1. Place the mask over the nose and under the chin, with one strap placed below the ears and one strap above.
2. Position the metal part (if there is one) of the respirator over the top of the nose and use your fingers to form it to the contour of your nose bridge so that it fits securely.
3. Check how well it seals to the face by following the manufacturer's instructions for user seal checks. Adjust the respirator if air leaks between the seal and the face. The more air leaks under the seal, the less protection the user receives. If the respirator continues to leak air around the seal after adjustment, a different brand, model, or size must be used until proper fit is achieved.

4. Respirators must be replaced if they get damaged, deformed, dirty, or difficult to breathe through. Filtering facepiece respirators are disposable respirators that cannot be cleaned or disinfected. Filtering facepiece respirators should be replaced at the beginning of each shift.
5. If you have symptoms such as difficulty breathing, dizziness, or nausea, go to an area with cleaner air, take off the respirator, notify your supervisor and seek medical attention if needed.

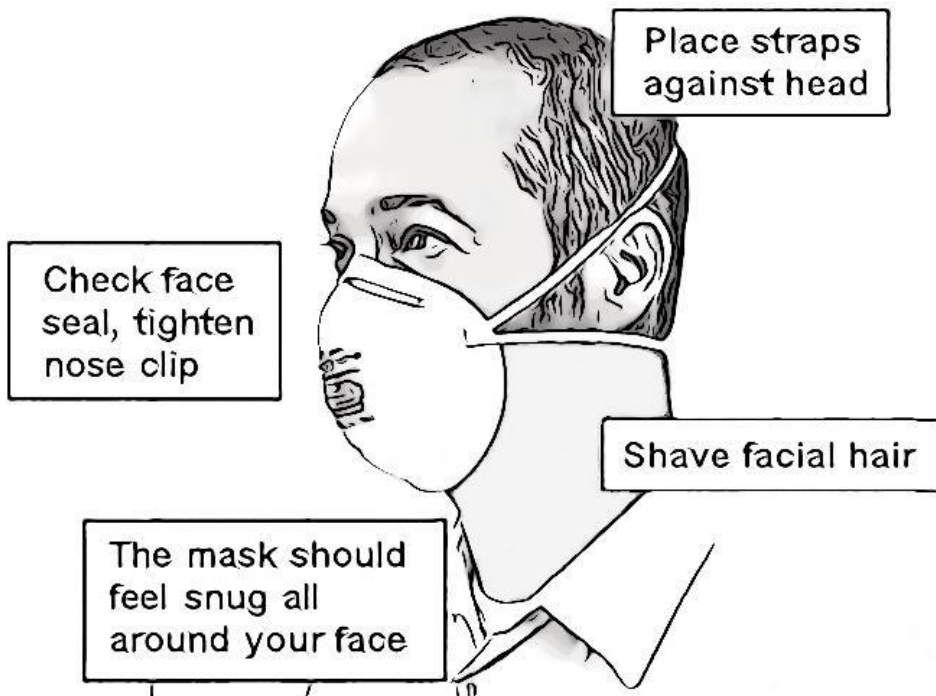


Figure 1. Drawing Showing Proper Fitting of a Filtering Facepiece Respirator

If you have any questions regarding these requirements, or proper usage, fitting, or sizing of FFRs, please contact the EH&S Industrial Hygiene Division using the information at the bottom of the page.

