



Respirator Voluntary Use Form

Filtering Facepiece Respirators



Harvard University policy permits the voluntary use of respirators where employees are not exposed to harmful concentration of dusts or aerosols.

Definition Filtering facepiece (dust mask) means a negative pressure particulate respirator with a filter as an integral part of the facepiece or with the entire facepiece composed of the filtering medium.

Filtering facepiece respirators should be disposed of and replaced with a new one each time they are removed.

Cartridge Respirators

Voluntary use of any other type of respirator requires a medical evaluation from a physician or clinician prior to use, and a hazard review by EH&S.

OSHA Requirement

OSHA requires the following information be provided to anyone considering the voluntary use of a respirator:

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, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirator's limitations.
2. Choose respirators 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.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed 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.

Additional Information

Harvard EH&S should be contacted prior to the use of a respirator if you have any questions or concerns.

By signing this form you are acknowledging that you have read and understand all of its content.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____