



Respiratory Protection

Dust Mask and Respirator Safety Reference Guide

Most production employees at this facility use respiratory protection on a voluntary basis. Maintenance employees may be required to use respirators for specific tasks. Whether voluntary or required, proper use and disposal of respiratory protection is critical to your safety and the safety of those around you.

KEY PRINCIPLES	
Voluntary vs. Required	Maintenance employees may be required to use respirators. All other employees may use dust masks voluntarily.
NIOSH Approved Only	Only NIOSH-approved respirators are authorized for use. Do not use non-approved masks.
Dispose Properly	Disposable respirators must be disposed of after the task is complete. Never leave them in the work area.
Appendix D	Employees will receive a copy of OSHA Appendix D of the Respiratory Protection Standard for reference.

RESPIRATORY HAZARD OVERVIEW

The production environment may contain dust, particles, and vapors at varying levels. Under normal working conditions, dust masks or respirators are not required in production areas. Maintenance tasks may create conditions requiring respirator use for those employees. When in doubt about whether respiratory protection is needed, ask your supervisor.

TYPES OF RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Dust Masks (N95)

- Filter at least 95% of airborne particles when properly fitted.
- Must be NIOSH-approved. Look for the NIOSH label before use.
- Must form a seal against the face to be effective. Beards and facial hair compromise fit.
- Disposable. Use once and discard properly.



Half-Face Respirators

- Cover nose and mouth. Provide filtration for particulates and some vapors.
- Used by maintenance employees for specific tasks as required.
- Follow manufacturer instructions for cartridge replacement intervals.

HOW TO USE CORRECTLY

Read the manufacturer's instructions before donning any respirator.

Perform a seal check: positive pressure (exhale and feel for leaks) and negative pressure (inhale and feel mask pull in).

Wear the respirator for the entire duration of the hazardous task.

Do not remove the respirator while still in the hazard area.

Remove carefully to avoid self-contamination: touch only the straps, not the filter surface.

PROPER DISPOSAL

Disposable respirators and dust masks must be discarded immediately after completing the task.

Place in designated waste containers.

Do NOT leave in the work area, hang on machines, or place on work surfaces.

Reusable respirators must be cleaned, inspected, and properly stored after each use.

NIOSH-approved. Properly fitted. Properly disposed. Every single time.

RESPIRATOR USE CHECKLIST

Follow each time respiratory protection is needed.



- ☐ Confirmed NIOSH-approved respirator is being used
- ☐ Manufacturer instructions reviewed before donning
- ☐ Seal check performed before entering the work area
- ☐ Worn for the entire duration of the hazardous task
- ☐ Not removed while still in the hazard area
- ☐ Removed carefully by straps, not touching the filter surface
- ☐ Disposable respirator discarded immediately after use
- ☐ Respirator not left in the work area or on any surface

This document is part of the Meat Institute Worker Safety Series, supporting Reporting Metric A4: Supervisors lead safety huddles and toolbox chats regularly with hourly workers.

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