

November 19, 2012

### Information on Dust Masks (Filtering Facepiece Respirators)

IMPORTANT: The dust mask, when used as indicated, will reduce but not eliminate your respiratory exposure to airborne particulate.

This applies to homeowners, volunteers and other persons doing emergency debris removal from water damaged buildings for a short time. Other legal requirements apply to persons paid to do this work.

- An N95 Mask with a NIOSH label, 2-strap respirator protects against dusts and sprayed particles if the mask is worn properly. It can make the difference between getting sick and staying well while performing important work. An unapproved dust mask can't be relied on to protect you. No one strap mask or mask without a NIOSH label is approved.
- The mask can reduce breathing exposures to certain airborne biological particles but cannot eliminate the risk of contracting infection.
- **The mask provide no protection against solvent and paint vapors, or engine exhaust, and should not be used for dangerous dusts like asbestos or sandblasting. The mask doesn't protect against lack of oxygen in a tank, bin or other confined space.**
- Nearly all your exposure to dust while wearing the respirator comes from leakage through opening where the mask may not contact your face, especially from openings around your nose and chin.
- Beards which get between the respirator and your face will prevent a good seal.
- Leave the contaminated area immediately if dizziness, irritation, or other distress occurs, or if you smell strong odors. If you have delayed or continuing symptoms like shortness of breath or persistent cough, you should seek medical attention and not return to the environment which may have caused the problems.

Putting on the mask:

- When putting on the mask, place respirator on your face so that the foam rests on your nose. Hold the bottom securely under your chin. Pull the top strap over your head and position it high on the back of the head. Then pull the bottom strap over your head and position it around the neck and below the ears. Adjust for a comfortable fit by pulling top panel toward the bridge of the nose and the bottom under chin.
- Place your fingertips from both hands at the top of the metal nosepiece. Using two hands, mold the nose area to the shape of your nose by pushing inward while moving your fingertips down both sides of the nosepiece. (Pinching the nosepiece using one hand may result in improper fit and less effective respirator performance. Use two hands.)
- Fit check: cover the mask as much as possible and breath out hard to detect leaks.