

# **UCSB Respiratory Protection Program**

## **Filtering Facepiece Respirator Voluntary Use Requirements**

**Personnel who will wear filtering facepiece respirators (FFRs) on a voluntary basis must read the Filtering Facepiece Respirator Voluntary Use Requirements and sign the Voluntary Use Consent Form. If individuals are required to wear filtering facepiece respirators or other respiratory protection to perform their job duties, they must first enroll in the UCSB Respiratory Protection Program.**

### **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 appropriately 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.

FFR users should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators 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 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.
5. Air filtering respirators DO NOT supply oxygen. Do not use in situations where the oxygen levels are questionable or unknown.

**At UCSB the voluntary use of filtering facepiece respirators must be approved by EH&S and is only allowed under the following conditions:**

1. Individuals have read and understood all information provided by the manufacturer regarding the respirator's use and limitations.
2. The FFR is certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
3. Safety Data Sheets for all materials have been reviewed, and a documented Job Hazard Analysis has been completed (if applicable).
4. FFRs are only used for protection against known contaminants below their applicable exposure limits. FFRs shall not be used in oxygen-deficient atmospheres, atmospheres containing contaminants above their Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs), unknown atmospheres, known hazardous atmospheres, or for protection against contaminants which they are not designed for.

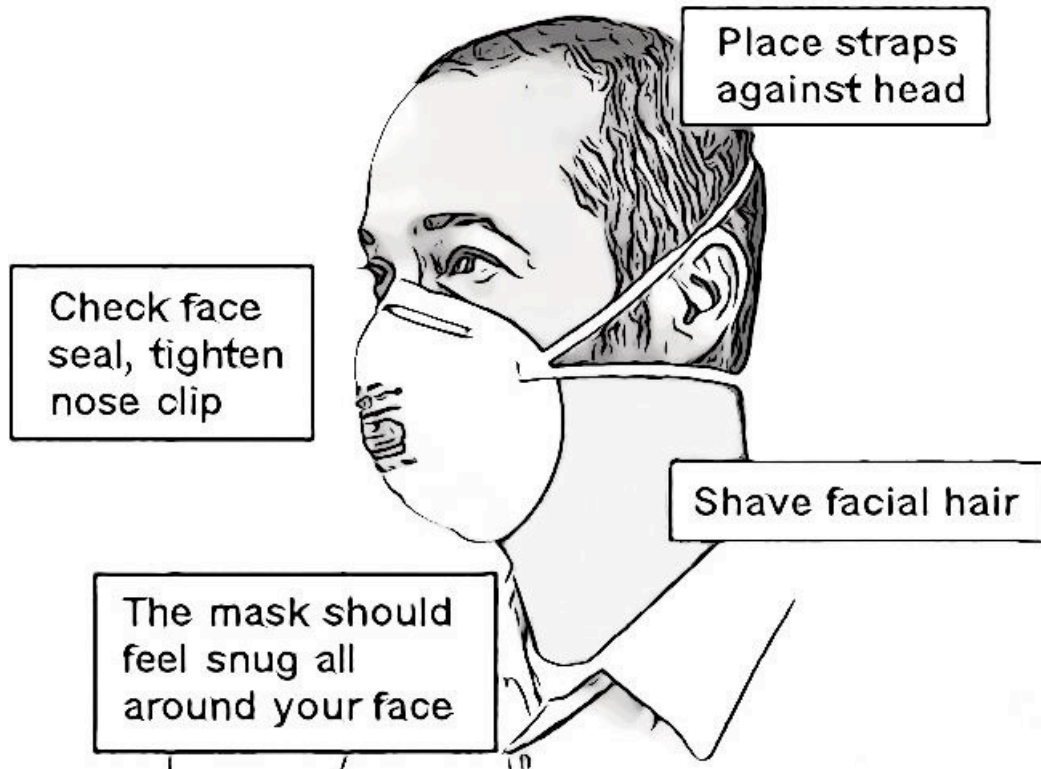
**If you have any questions regarding the proper usage of FFRs, please contact the EH&S Industrial Hygiene Division using the information at the bottom of the page.**



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.

For N95s or other filtering facepiece respirator mask that is made of filter material:

- (1) Place the mask over the nose and under the chin, with one strap placed below the ears and one strap above.
- (2) Pinch the metal part (if there is one) of the respirator over the top of the nose so it fits securely.



**Figure 1. Drawing Showing Proper Fitting of a Filtering Facepiece Respirator (shaving is not required for voluntary respirator use)**

For a respirator that relies on a tight seal to the face, 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.

Respirator filters should 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. A best practice is to replace filtering facepiece respirators at the beginning of each shift.

If you have symptoms such as difficulty breathing, dizziness, or nausea, go to an area with cleaner air, take off the respirator, and get medical help.