

Safe Which Respirator is Right for You?

Particulate Respirator



Particulate respirators are the simplest, least expensive, but the least protective of the respirator types available. These respirators only protect against particles (e.g., dust), but they do not protect against gases or vapors. The commonly known "N-95" filtering facepiece respirator or "dust mask" is one type of particulate respirator. Half-face and full-face respirators can also be equipped with particulate cartridges, usually P100s. Particulate respirators are "air purifying respirators" because they clean particles out of the air as you breathe.

- Filters out dust, fumes, and mists
- Usually disposable or have disposable filters
- Replace when discolored, damaged, or clogged



Chemical Cartridge/Gas Mask Respirator

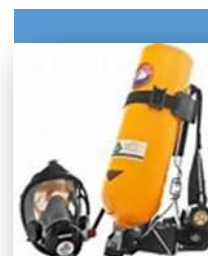
Gas masks are known as "air-purifying respirators" because they filter or clean chemical gases out of the air. This respirator includes a facepiece and a cartridge or canister. Straps secure the facepiece to the head. The cartridge may also have a filter to remove particles. Gas masks are effective only if used with the correct cartridge or filter (these terms are often used interchangeably) for a biological or chemical substance. Selecting the proper filter can be a complicated process. There are cartridges available that protect against more than one hazard, but there is no "all-in one" cartridge that protects against all substances. It is important to know what hazards you will face to be certain you are choosing the right filters/cartridges.

- Uses replaceable chemical cartridges or canisters to remove contaminant.
- They are universally color-coded to help you select the correct one.
- May require combination cartridges that protect against several hazards.



Powered Air-Purifying Respirator (PAPR)

Powered air-purifying respirators use a fan to draw air through the filter to the user. They are easier to breathe through but they need a fully charged battery to work properly. They use the same type of filters/cartridges as other air-purifying respirators. It is important to know what the hazard is, and how much of it is in the air, to select the proper filters/cartridges.



Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)

SCBAs use their own air tank to supply clean air, so you don't need to worry about filters. They protect against higher concentrations of dangerous chemicals. They are very heavy (30 pounds or more) and require very special training on how to use and to maintain them. The air tanks typically last an hour or less depending upon their rating and the user's breathing rate (how hard you are breathing).

- They provide clean air from a portable air tank when the air around is too dangerous to breathe or filter.