

Voluntary Use of Respiratory Protection Form

Some Northwestern personnel may choose to wear NIOSH-approved particulate respirators/filtering facepieces (e.g., N-95 or P-100 disposable dust masks) on a voluntary basis during activities that involve exposures to low-level, non-hazardous nuisance dust or other similar particulates. According to OSHA and the Northwestern Respiratory Protection Program, anyone wearing a filtering facepiece voluntarily must be provided with the following information:

29 CFR 1910.134 Appendix D:

Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

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:

- A. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
- B. 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.
- C. 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.
- D. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.

The filtering facepiece respirator you have elected to use is approved, when fitted properly, for use against nuisance, non-hazardous particulate (e.g., fiberglass, drywall dust, sawdust, dirt, pollen, animal dander). It will not provide protection from any chemical vapors (i.e., those associated with spray paints or solvents). It is not intended for use during work that may involve exposure to airborne asbestos fibers, silica dust, or heavy metal particles; work that may involve these substances should be reviewed by an NU Safety Professional before the project proceeds.

For questions in non-research areas, contact Gwen Butler, Director, Environmental Health and Safety, at gwen.butler@northwestern.edu or (847) 491-4936. For questions in research areas, contact Anne Hsiao, Laboratory Safety Specialist, Research Safety, at anne.hsiao@northwestern.edu or (847) 467-2660.

Please complete the section below:

Print Name: _____ Net ID: _____

Job Title: _____ Work Phone Number: _____

Department: _____ PI/Supervisor: _____

Type of Mask: _____ Location of use: _____

Reason for using mask (describe nature of work and type of dust): _____

I have read and understood the information provided above:

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____