

 <p>Naugatuck Valley Community College 750 Chase Parkway • Waterbury, CT 06708</p>	STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE	
	Voluntary Use of Dust Masks	
	Issued:	Revised:

PURPOSE

This procedure was developed for the voluntary use of filtering facepiece respirators, often referred to as dust masks (e.g. N95 disposable particulate respirator), by employees of Naugatuck Valley Community College. It does not apply to any other type of air filtering respirator. This practice shall be allowed only when certain conditions are met.

No medical evaluation, medical approval, or fit-testing is required for the voluntary use of filtering facepiece dust masks.

This program complies with the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard 29 CFR 1910.143(c)(2)(i) with the exception in 1910.134(c)(2)(ii).

CONDITIONS

Employees may choose to participate in this program as long as the following conditions exist:

- Exposure is only to non-toxic nuisance materials.
- Exposure to airborne contaminants is below OSHA permissible exposure limits (PELs).
- The dust mask is not worn to reduce exposure to gases or vapors.
- There is no exposure to airborne infectious disease agents.
- Wearing the dust mask will not in itself create a hazard.

PROCEDURE

An employee who chooses to voluntarily wear a filtering dust mask must get their supervisor’s approval. The supervisor will review the intended use with the Coordinator of Environmental Affairs and Occupational Health & Safety (EAOH&S) to assure that the conditions stated above exist. If necessary, air monitoring will be conducted. The form titled, “Filtering Facepiece Respirator (Dust Mask) Approval Form” (page 2) will be completed and signed by the supervisor, the Coordinator of EAOH&S, and the employee. This form will be maintained by the Coordinator of EAOH&S.

Upon approval, the employee will be given and must read the short training instructions (page 3) titled, “Employee Information: Voluntary Dust Mask Respirator Use”.



Filtering Facepiece (Dust Mask) Approval Form For Comfort Use Only

This form is to be used for the approval to use filtering facepiece respirators, or dust masks, for employee **COMFORT ONLY**, *not for protection against hazardous dusts, gases, or vapors*. The employee should be able to remove the respirator at any time without concern about adverse health effects from the material in use. Medical approval is not needed since the respirator is not used for protection against hazardous materials. However, employees who have a history of heart or respiratory problems, or feel that they may have such problems, should seek their physician's approval to wear this device prior to the submission of his form.

This program in compliance with OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.143(c)(2)(i) with the exception in 1910.134(c)(2)(ii).

_____ has requested participation in this program.
(Employee Name)

The dust mask will be only used for the following task(s):

The conditions stated in the written program exist as understood by the employee's supervisor and the Coordinator of EAOH&S. The employee was given a copy and asked to read the mandatory handout titled, "Instructions for Voluntary Dust Mask Respirator Use at NVCC". By signing below the employee certifies that he/she has read and understands the instructions.

Supervisor Signature

Employee Signature

Coordinator of EAOH&S

Date



Employee Information

Voluntary Dust Mask Respirator Use

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:

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 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.**
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator. Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Dust mask respirators may be used when nuisance dust exposures are below the exposure limit set by OSHA, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for employees. The following rules must be adhered to ensure the safe and appropriate use of the respirator.