Seven Steps to Correctly Wear a Respirator at Work

Following these simple steps will help you properly put on and take off your respirator, and keep you and everyone else safe.

1. **Wash Your Hands**

Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.

2. **Inspect the Respirator**

Inspect the respirator for damage. If it appears damaged or damp, do not use it.

3. **Put on the Respirator**

- Cup the respirator in your hand with the nosepiece at your fingertips and the straps hanging below your hand.
- Cover your mouth and nose with the respirator and make sure there are no gaps (e.g., facial hair, hair, and glasses) between your face and the respirator.
- Place the strap over your head and rest at the top back of your head. If you have a second strap, place the bottom strap around your neck and below your ears. Do not crisscross straps.
- If your respirator has a metal nose clip, use your fingertips from both hands to mold the nose area to the shape of your nose.

4. **Adjust the Respirator**

- Place both hands over the respirator. Inhale quickly and then exhale. If you feel leakage from the nose, readjust the nosepiece; if leakage from the respirator edges, readjust the straps.
- Repeat until you get a proper seal. If you can’t get a proper seal, try another respirator.

5. **Wear the Respirator**

- Avoid touching the respirator while using it. If you do, wash your hands.

6. **Remove the Respirator**

- Wash your hands.
- Remove the respirator from behind. Do not touch the front.

7. **Dispose of the Respirator**

If the respirator does not need to be reused because of supply shortages, discard it in a closed-bin waste receptacle. Wash your hands.

For more information, see the quick video, “Putting On and Taking Off a Mask.”

Note: If you reuse your respirator, wear gloves when inspecting and putting on the respirator. Avoid touching your face (including your eyes, nose, and mouth) during the process.