

Face masks and respirators can provide different levels of protection depending on the type of mask and how they are used.

- Loosely woven cloth masks → provide the least protection
- Layered, finely woven cloth masks → provide better protection
- Well-fitting disposable procedure masks and KN95s → offer even more protection
- Well-fitting NIOSH-approved respirators (including N95s) → offer the highest level of protection

An **N95 respirator** is a respiratory protective device designed to achieve a very close facial fit and very efficient filtration of airborne particles.

- The 'N95' designation means that when subjected to careful testing, the respirator blocks at least 95 percent of very small (0.3 micron) test particles.
 - If properly fitted, the filtration capabilities of N95 respirators exceed those of cloth and procedure face masks.
 - A proper seal between the user's face and the respirator forces inhaled air to be pulled through the respirator's filter material and not through gaps between the face and respirator.
 - Do not wear an N95 respirator if it is wet, dirty, or if you feel like it is too difficult to breath while wearing one.
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- To offer protection, cloth face masks, procedure masks, and respirators need to be worn correctly and consistently.
 - Do not share face masks.
 - Ensure that any face mask you wear does not interfere with your ability to complete work assignments safely.



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Discussion

In what work situations would an N95 respirator be preferred or required?

How should your N95 respirator be handled and stored?