

Voluntary Use Respiratory Protection

Voluntary use of respiratory protection means that an employee chooses to wear a respirator when it is not required by the University, the Minnesota Department of Health, or any OSHA standard. The following information describes the process that the University and employees must follow to comply with the [University Respiratory Protection Program](#) voluntary use of respirators.

Note that personal use of a mask or respirator for protection against the common cold, flu, or COVID-19 are not covered under voluntary use. Employees are encouraged to stay home if they are experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms.

Evaluation of Respiratory Hazards

Per the 1910.134 OSHA Respiratory Protection standard, the University must evaluate workplace respiratory hazards to ensure employees are not exposed. If it is established that a respiratory hazard does not exist or exceeds designated occupational limits, voluntary respiratory protection may be used. For evaluation, contact Health, Safety & Risk Management at hsrc@umn.edu or (612) 626-6002.

NIOSH Certified Respirators

Health, Safety & Risk Management requires the use of NIOSH certified respirators and NIOSH approved filters, cartridges, and canisters for voluntary use. NIOSH certified respirators are clearly marked and use a lever-and-number system specified in 42 CFR Part 84; see the [NIOSH Guide to the Selection and Use of Particulate Respirators](#).

Voluntary Use Requirements

Employees who voluntarily use respirators still must complete requirements prior to using the respirator. This includes reviewing Appendix D of 1910.134 OSHA Respiratory Protection standard, and (depending on the respirator) completing a medical evaluation. The following table summarizes how to complete the requirements for respirators based on the type of voluntary respiratory protection used.

Requirement	Filtering Face-Piece Respirator (Dust Mask)	Elastomeric Negative Pressure Respirator	Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR)	Supplied Air Respirator
Medical Evaluation	No	Yes, once before initial use. Contact hsrn@umn.edu for instructions and access to the evaluation.		
Appendix D Review	Yes, before initial use and included in the Voluntary Use Respirator Protection Training (UHS516)			
Clean, inspect, maintain, and storage	Yes, before initial use and included in the Voluntary Use Respirator Protection Training (UHS516)			
Annual Training	Not required			
Fit Testing	Not required			

Revised: 10/2025