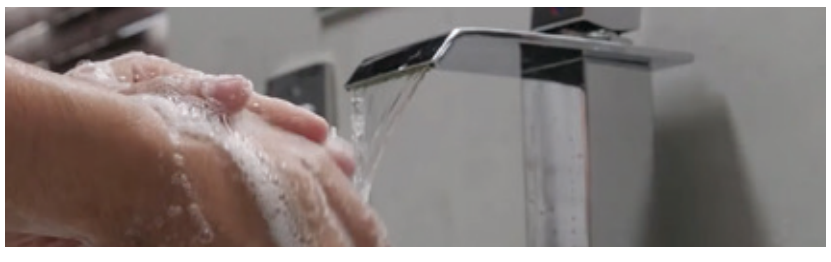
Seven Steps to Correctly Wear a Respirator at Work

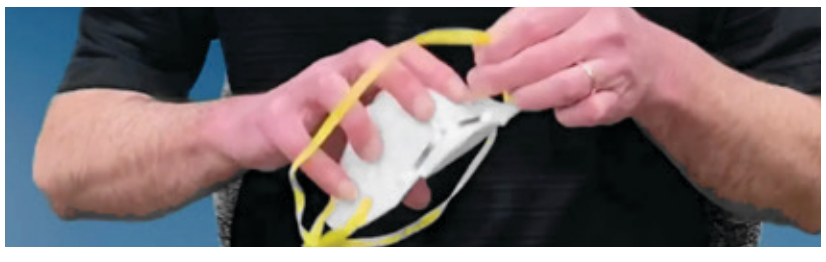
Following these simple steps will help you properly put on and take off your respirator, and keep you and everyone else safe.

❶ Wash Your Hands



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

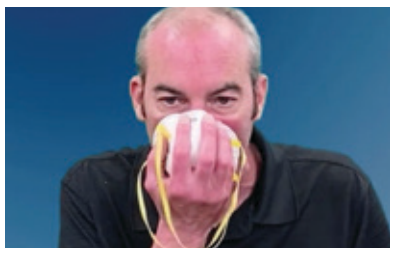
❷ Inspect the Respirator



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

❸ Put on the Respirator

Cup the respirator in your hand with the nosepiece at your fingertips and the straps hanging below your hand.

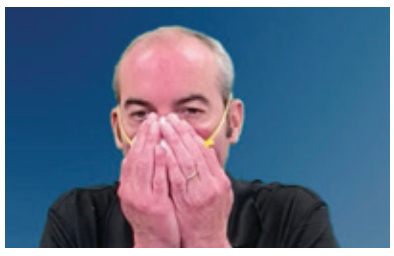


Cover your mouth and nose with the respirator and make sure there are no gaps (e.g., facial hair, hair, and glasses) between your face and the respirator.

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.

❹ 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.

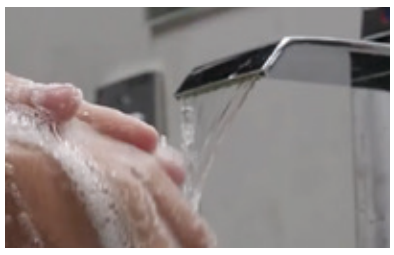
Repeat until you get a proper seal. If you can't get a proper seal, try another respirator.

❺ Wear the Respirator

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

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.

❻ Remove the Respirator



Wash your hands.

Remove the respirator from behind. Do not touch the front.

❼ 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". ▶

OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration

www.osha.gov

1-800-321-OSHA (6742)

TTY 1-877-889-5627

OSHA 4015-05 2020