

# SAFETY COMPENDIUM – FILTERING FACEPIECES



**Filtering facepiece (dust mask)** means a negative pressure particulate respirator with a filter as an integral part of the facepiece or with the entire facepiece composed of the filtering medium (see example above).

Postal employees may use filtering facepieces (FFP) rated no greater than N-95 without a mandatory medical assessment.

You may use a Filtering Facepiece type respirator for comfort whether it is your own or is provided by the Postal Service.

If your job does not require use of a respirator, but you wear it voluntarily, your supervisor will provide you with a copy of Appendix D to OSHA 1910.134, *Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard*. This information applies whether the Postal Service offers you an FFP or you choose to wear your own.

With local management approval, any postal employee may wear an FFP (dust mask) while working unless it would cause a hazardous condition.

Employees are not permitted to wear tight-fitting air-purifying respirators or other non-FFP respirators unless they are supplied by the Postal Service in conformance with OSHA regulations. This policy is for your protection.

The information OSHA requires the Postal Service to share with you deals mostly with tight-fitting respirators (such as the rubber-mask-type with canisters attached). However, some of this information is also pertinent to FFPs. Note the following points when wearing an FFP, whether it is your own or it is offered for your comfort by the Postal Service:

- Read the instructions for a more comfortable fit and effectiveness. Follow recommendations for fit testing and use, storage, and cleaning, because a dirty FFP can cause skin irritation or other health problems.
- FFPs may be suitable to provide comfort and to avoid allergens (like pollen) and nuisance dust. However, they do not necessarily protect you from toxic materials. If necessary, the Postal Service will supply you with a carefully selected respirator for that purpose in conformance with OSHA regulations.
- Do not wear an FFP if it causes breathing problems or other discomfort.
- Consult with safety or medical personnel.

Sources: Handbook EL-801, Supervisor's Safety Handbook; EL-814, Postal Employee's Guide to Safety; OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134, Respiratory Protection; MI EL-810-2001-1.