

Statement from Oregon OSHA and OHA on N95, KN95, and P100 masks

People who must be outdoors may be considering the use of masks to help protect their lungs from wildfire smoke. Masks can create a false sense of security if not properly selected, fitted and used. There are a few things you should know if you are considering the use of a mask:

- Avoid the use of surgical masks, bandanas and other common masks. These have not been shown to prevent smoke exposure.
- There are specialized masks that may prevent some smoke exposure. They do have limitations that should be considered when choosing whether to use them.
 - Users need to select a mask that fits properly to ensure a protective seal around the face. Occupational Health and Safety Programs provide education and assistance to support proper [use of a respirator](#).
 - The fit of the respirator must be tested to make sure air does not leak around the sides. Leaking air means that exposure to smoke can still occur.
 - Facial hair can cause the mask to seal incorrectly.
 - Care must be taken to select a “particulate respirator” that is marked with the word “NIOSH” and either “N95” or “P100” printed on it.
 - N95 respirators protect against the fine particles found in smoke, they do not protect wearers from the harmful gases found in wildfire smoke.
 - If the KN95s are on [the FDA-approved list](#) - and are properly fitted - then Oregon OSHA believes, in the current situation, they can be appropriately used for outdoor work when the Air Quality Index is unhealthy or worse.
 - » The use of non-NIOSH approved respirators may cause concern about a technical violation of rules. Oregon OSHA does not share this concern, in light of the present wildfire smoke emergency. And N95s remain relatively scarce, while the state has a supply of KN95s available for immediate distribution to vulnerable workers who are still expected to work.

- » Those with questions about use of masks in the workplace should contact their employers, or Oregon OSHA at <http://osha.oregon.gov/>.
- People with pre-existing health conditions should speak with their health care provider, prior to using a N95 or P100 respirator. The wearer may find breathing more difficult while wearing a mask. Breathing may be even more difficult for those with heart and lung conditions.
- The type of respirator that filters out harmful smoke particles is not available in children's sizes.

Document accessibility: For individuals with disabilities or individuals who speak a language other than English, OHA can provide information in alternate formats such as translations, large print, or braille. Contact Mavel Morales at 1-844-882-7889, 711 TTY or OHA.ADAModifications@dhsosha.state.or.us.