

Worksite: _____ Instructor: _____ Date/Time: _____

Topic C075: Dust Masks

Introduction: Dust masks (particulate respirators) are to be used in the workplace where airborne particulates such as saw dust, drywall dust, dirt, grain dust, and insulation, are generated or are present as part of the environment. Dust masks protect the worker's lungs and airway from damage due to the inhalation of airborne particulate matter.

Dust masks may be worn even when a ventilation system is in place and operational. Dust masks are not approved for asbestos exposure or any other airborne hazardous material. Long term exposure to airborne particulates can cause extreme respiratory problems. Following are guidelines for the use of dust masks:

Guidelines:

- **Always review material** safety data sheets (MSDS) on the chemicals and material that you are working with. Many chemicals and materials will not be filtered by a dust mask and the use of a respirator is required.
- **Dusts masks are** to be used for airborne particulates and are not suitable for hazardous levels of vapors and extremely fine particulates.
- **Change your dust** mask frequently and whenever you note any discoloration from the accumulation of particulates.
- **Since your airflow** will be slightly reduced, it is important to take frequent breaks while wearing a dust mask.
- **A dust mask with** an exhalation valve may assist breathing. Take your breaks in fresh air and remove the mask.
- **If you feel faint** or develop a headache, stop work immediately and get some fresh air. Locate the source of your symptoms, and correct the problem before returning to work.
- **Ensure that your** dust mask fits you snugly. If you feel air leaking around the edges of the mask adjust the mask or switch to a different mask.
- **Dust masks** should also be designed to fit over the bridge of the nose. Many dust masks have a nose clip which when adjusted properly helps to seal that area of the mask to the face. It is important that the nose be covered snugly to ensure that airborne particulates do not enter the lungs through the nose.
- **Beards may interfere** with the proper fit of dust masks. Beards or any facial hair which interferes with proper fitting should not be worn when respiratory protection is necessary.
- **Dust masks are** to be used only by one person. Never share or re-use dust masks.
- **Dust masks** (particulate respirators) are designed for many different uses from sweeping, sawing, and grinding to nuisance level odor control, and substance specific contaminant filtering. Choosing the right design for your task will increase the usefulness of these devices.

If you feel faint or develop a headache, stop work immediately and get some fresh air. Locate the source of your symptoms and correct the problem before returning to work.

Conclusion: Restricting the total time workers are exposed to an air contaminant is important for respiratory protection. Properly used, dust masks protect workers from hazards but a dust mask does not eliminate the hazards. A dust mask is a form of personal protective equipment (PPE); however, if a dust mask is inappropriate for a particular task, the user risks exposure. Appropriate protection depends upon selecting, wearing, and using the correct dust mask.

Employee Attendance: (Names or signatures of personnel who are attending this meeting)

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These guidelines do not supersede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations.