

Knowledge that will change your world

Do you know the difference between a dust mask and a respirator?

What is a dust mask? A dust mask is a disposable filtering face piece that is not NIOSH approved. They are worn for comfort against non-toxic nuisance dusts generated by things such as mowing, gardening, sweeping, and dusting. They do not protect against hazardous dusts, gases, or vapors.

What is a respirator? A respirator is a NIOSH approved device designed to protect the wearer from inhaling hazardous dusts, fumes, vapors, or gases. An N95 is one type of respirator that protects the wearer from inhaling hazardous dusts.

How do I tell the difference in a respirator and a dust mask? Look for the NIOSH label printed on the box and/or mask.

Dust “nuisance” mask



N95 Respirator

If you or your staff wears a respirator you must comply with all the requirements of UAB OH&S Respiratory Protection Program, which include: Medical certification, training, and annual fit testing.

If you have questions or think you need a respirator please give the Occupational Health Safety Department a call at 934-2487 or visit, <https://www.uab.edu/ohs/occupational-medicine/occupational-medicine-respiratory-protection>. We can perform a respiratory hazard assessment of work tasks to determine whether respiratory protection is needed.

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