

Personal Protective Equipment – Respirators

This discussion does not and is not intended to fulfill OSHA requirements.

Why should I wear a respirator while I clean out a hurricane-damaged home?

- Exposure to dust and mold spores can cause adverse health effects.
- Respirators, like the N-95 and N-100, help protect you from exposure to toxic dust and mold spores that become airborne while you work. Use only NIOSH approved respirators. “Dust Masks” or surgical masks should not be used, nor should any respirator that has only one strap.
- Wearing a respirator incorrectly will reduce its effectiveness. Most respirators have a metal band that is designed to fit over the bridge of your nose and be molded to your shape. All of the straps on the respirator must be used and worn correctly for the respirator to fit properly and protect you.
- Always carefully read and follow the instructions for your respirator to insure a correct fit and the proper level of protection.
- If you have a heart or lung condition, such as asthma, you should consult with your physician before working in hurricane-damaged homes, very dusty environments, or wearing a respirator.
- If you have facial hair, your respirator will not fit correctly or protect you.
- If a respirator is too large for you, a smaller size can be purchased via the Internet.
- Common errors when using respirators include:
 - Orientation of the respirator.
 - Placement of the straps.
 - Use of the nose clip.

