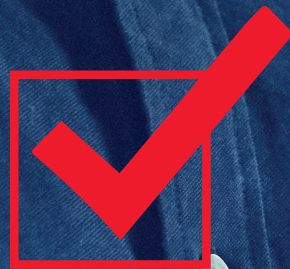


**3M** Science.  
Applied to Life.™



**Check it.  
Fit it.  
Wear it.**



Your 3-step guide to respiratory protection



**Is your respirator helping  
to reduce your exposure  
to potentially harmful  
airborne particles?**





**There are many different types of respirators, and it is essential to select a product that offers adequate protection against the airborne hazards identified in your risk assessment.**

The respirator must also be suitable for the wearer, the task and the environment; for example, an exhalation valve can help to reduce heat build-up inside the respirator and may be more suitable than an unvalved respirator for wearers who need to complete physically active tasks.

Choosing the right respirator can be challenging. Follow our 3-step guide to help reduce your workers' exposure to hazardous airborne particles in the workplace.

**What you breathe matters. Choose wisely.**







# Check it.

**Quality is critical when it comes to Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE).**

If the quality of the respirator does not meet country and industry requirements, it may not provide adequate protection to the wearer.

Is the product approved to your local regulatory requirements?  
Check your local requirements as regulations differ around the world.

**Follow our checklist for other factors that need to be considered when selecting a respirator.**





# Check it.



**3M has free-of-charge tools available to help you.**



View

3M Respiratory Advisor



View

3M Select & Service Life Software



View

3M CE Certificates

## Checklist

### ✓ Is the product fit for application?

Choosing the right respirator is key. It doesn't matter how well made the respirator is, if it can't help reduce exposure to hazards that it's not designed for.

#### Check:

1. Identify airborne hazards and understand the risks.
2. Implement control measures and decide whether RPE is required.
3. Determine the type and level of protection needed.
4. Choose an adequate and suitable respirator.

### ✓ CE marking \*\*

Respirators sold in the EU must be approved to EN standards and the CE marking must be written on the product. CE Category III approved respirators always have the letters 'CE' followed by 4 digits. The digits refer to the Notified Body who are responsible for the conformity assessment of the PPE.

### ✓ Has the product been certified by the appropriate regulatory body?

You can double check if the notified body has the authority to approve PPE, by checking that they reference the Regulation (EU) 2016/425 – Personal Protective Equipment regulation on their listing in the European Commission's NANDO database\*. Some notified bodies also offer a service, that allows the purchaser to check that the CE certificate issued and shared by a PPE manufacturer is genuine.



**3M Tip: 3M™ Disposable Respirators are marked with CE 2797**

\*<https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/nando/index.cfm?fuseaction=notifiedbody.main>

\*\* UKCA marking also applies to PPE sold in the UK.





# Check it.



## ✓ Is the product from a reputable seller?

The demand for disposable respirators sky-rocketed during the pandemic. This in turn has led to an influx of new manufacturers and suppliers entering the market, some of whom may not have the same quality control processes as other manufacturers.

## ✓ Counterfeit respirators

The increase in demand has led to a rise in counterfeit respirators flooding the market. Often these products do not provide the level of protection required against harmful particles and substances. Do not endanger yourself or others by making the mistake of thinking that fake respirators look ok, so they must work ok. Check the product has been tested or certified to meet rigorous regulatory safety standards.

### Other checks to be mindful of:

- **The price point** - Counterfeit products are often sold at a lower price than genuine products, making them attractive to buyers looking to save money.
- **The product fit** - Counterfeit products may not fit properly, which can cause air leaks and reduce their effectiveness.
- **The materials** - Counterfeit products may also have poor quality materials and workmanship, which can result in product failure during use.
- **The seller** - It is recommended to purchase respiratory protection products from a trusted, reputable manufacturer and authorised distributor.



✓ **Check the use-by date**

For 3M™ Disposable Respirators, look out for the symbol below on the product packaging. After this date products should not be used.



End of shelf life.  
Date format : YYYY/MM/DD

✓ **Make sure you are storing appropriately.**

Please check the information provided in the User Instructions. Products must be stored in the original packaging, away from contaminated areas, dust, sunlight, extreme temperatures, excessive moisture, and damaging chemicals.

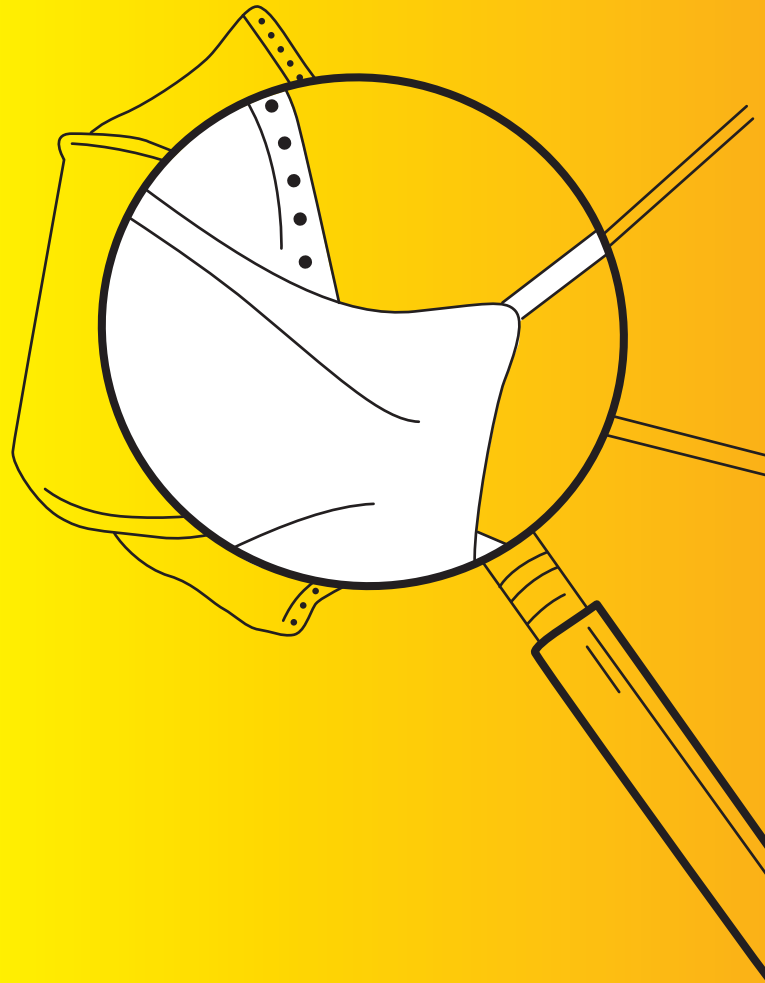
✓ **Check the condition of your respirator.**

If it is dirty, damaged, or difficult to breathe through, it should be discarded and replaced. Devices marked 'NR' (non-reusable) must always be replaced at the end of your shift.



**3M Tip:** For more information on where to buy 3M™ Respirators, please visit our product catalogue and click 'Where to buy' to be directed to your local distributor.

**Do not endanger yourself or others by making the mistake of thinking that fake respirators look ok so they must work ok.**



**Explore the 3M Respirator Product Catalogue.**



[View](#)









# Fit it.

**Fit is individual – no face is the same, so a respirator model fits different people differently.**

A respirator must be able to provide adequate protection for the individual wearer. It cannot help to protect the wearer if there is a leak between the respirator and the wearer's face.

A major cause of leaks is poor fit – tight-fitting facepieces, such as disposable respirators, half masks or full face masks (including those fitted to a powered respirator), need to fit the wearer's face to be effective.

**Follow our checklist to learn more about respirator fit.**





## Fit it.



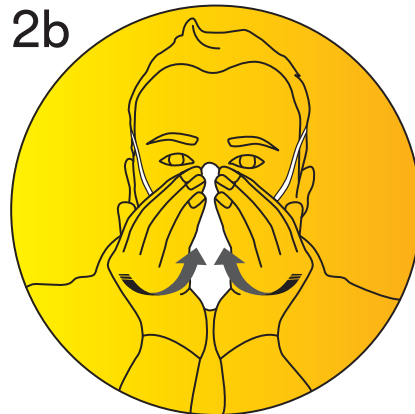
### Checklist

- ✓ Has the wearers been face fit tested on the specific make and model?
- ✓ If a wearer needs more than one type of tight-fitting facepiece, then each type of facepiece should be fit tested.
- ✓ The best time to do fit testing is at the initial selection stage, when individual users can be given a choice of adequate models of RPE.
- ✓ You should ensure that the make, model, type and size of facepiece that was worn when the wearer had their successful fit test is made available for their use.
- ✓ Take the time to train the wearer on how to wear the mask correctly.
- ✓ They should practise wearing the respirator to make sure it fits properly, is comfortable and that it can be worn for the full duration required, given the demands of the job.
- ✓ Is a user seal check performed daily to help ensure the respirator is sealing properly? No matter how many times a wearer takes off their mask during the day, each time the respirator is put back on, a user seal check must be carried out.

## The following user seal check procedure should always be followed every time a disposable respirator is put on.

- ✓ 1. Cover the front of the respirator with both hands being careful not to disturb the fit of the respirator.
- ✓ 2. Seal check
  - a. UNVALVED respirator – EXHALE Sharply
  - b. VALVED respirator – INHALE sharply
- ✓ 3. If air leaks around the nose, re-adjust the nose clip/face seal to help eliminate leakage. Repeat the seal check.
- ✓ 4. If air leaks at the respirator edges, work the straps back along the sides of the head to eliminate leakage. Repeat the seal check.

💡 **3M Tip:** If you cannot achieve an adequate seal, do not enter the contaminated environment.











# Wear it.

**This may be obvious, but the respirator must be worn properly at all times of potential exposure to provide the expected protection.**

- Perform a user seal check every time you replace your respirator.
- Read the user instructions!

**Follow our checklist for other factors that need to be considered when wearing a respirator.**





# Wear it.



## Checklist

- ✓ **Tight fitting respirators need to seal tightly to your face to create a proper seal. It's important that wearers understand this and know how to fit their respirator correctly.**
  - Gaps in this face seal let the contaminated air inside your respirator.
  - Respirator filters cannot clean the air that bypasses the filter and is leaking through the face seal.
- ✓ **Is the respirator compatible with the other PPE that is being worn?**
  - In many workplaces there is a requirement to wear more than one type of PPE at any one time. Despite the fact that the items of PPE required will be individually CE/UKCA marked and fully approved to the relevant harmonised European standard(s), this does not necessarily mean that they will fit well together on the wearer.
  - Compatibility of PPE should be assessed for each individual person to determine whether the PPE can be worn in a way that no one item compromises the ability of another to help protect the wearer.
  - Remember to ensure that any other head mounted PPE that needs to be worn while working is also worn during a face fit test.

Download your **FREE** Fit Testing resources.



View



**Clean shaven**



**Full beard**



**Soul-patch**



**Stubble**

## **Being clean shaven is important to achieve respiratory protection.**

- ✓ Respirator contaminants, like particulates, can bypass facial hair that is preventing an adequate seal and expose the wearer.
- ✓ Studies have shown that the presence of facial hair can significantly reduce the expected levels of protection.
- ✓ Even a day or two's growth of stubble/moustache/sideburn can be enough to significantly interfere with respirator fit and allow leak paths for contaminants.
- ✓ To achieve expected level of respiratory protection it's best to be clean shaven, but there are some facial hairstyles that may be suitable.





**Make sure you help to protect your employees from exposure to hazardous airborne particles.**



View

Try the 3M  
Respirator Advisor.



View

Explore the 3M Respirator  
Product Catalogue.

For where to buy information, choose the respirator you require via one of the links above and you will be directed to a 3M distributor.

**What you breathe matters. Choose wisely.**



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