

Technical Operations Voluntary Use of Cloth Face Coverings and Masks During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The CDC has recently advised that the use of simple cloth face coverings will slow the spread of the virus and help people, especially those that are infected but asymptomatic, from transmitting it to others. The CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.

In an effort to supplement actions taken to slow the spread of the virus that causes the COVID-19 illness, the FAA is allowing employees to voluntarily use cloth face coverings, in addition to any agency-supplied masks in the performance of their duties when reporting to work at FAA-owned or leased facilities. Employees with pre-existing or other health conditions which may compromise or preclude their ability to wear a mask must not voluntarily use one in the workplace.

As masks become available they will be provided for voluntary users, along with a copy of Appendix D, in OSHA's 29 CFR 1910.134. *See below.*

Appendix D to OSHA 29 CFR, 1910.134, (Mandatory) Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard.

You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else's respirator.