

COVID-19 FACEMASKS VS. RESPIRATORS



Cloth or Paper Face Mask



Surgical Face Mask



Filtering Facepiece Respirator (i.e. N95)

Testing & Approval	Not tested or approved, but recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	Cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration per 21 CFR 878.4040	Evaluated, tested and approved by National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH) per 42 CFR Part 84
Intended Use & Purpose	To prevent transmission of the virus between people in close proximity	A fluid resistant barrier designed to protect the wearer from large droplets, splashes or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids.	Protects the wearer from small particle aerosols and large droplets
Who Should Wear?	Everyone in public settings where social distancing is infeasible e.g. grocery store or pharmacy	Healthcare workers when N95 respirators are not available and patients who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19	Workers providing care or in prolonged proximity to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases
Face Seal Fit	Loose-Fitting	Loose-Fitting	Tight-Fitting
Fit Test Required?	No*	No*	Yes**
User Seal Check Required?	No	No	Yes, each time the respirator is put on
Filtration	Not classified as a filtering face-piece respirator to protect against inhaling smaller airborne particles	Not classified as a filtering face-piece respirator to protect against inhaling smaller airborne particles	Filters ~95% of small airborne particles
Leakage	Leakage occurs around the edge of the mask when user inhales	Leakage occurs around the edge of the mask when user inhales	When properly fitted, minimal leakage occurs around edges of the respirator when user inhales
Use Limitations	Reusable. Launder routinely. Discard if mask becomes damaged.	Not designed for reuse. Discard after each patient encounter.	Ideally discarded after each prolonged encounter with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case; limited reuse acceptable under certain conditions.

*Fit tests are not required for loose-fitting facepieces. **If employee is required to wear an N95, testing is required. Additional information regarding fit testing during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found under the [March 14, 2020 memo](#) and the [April 8, 2020 memo](#).