

# Breathe Easier: Respiratory Protection

## Submitted Questions

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**1. You said that dust masks can be voluntarily used for protection against nuisance particulates. What about nuisance odors?**

Some manufacturers of filtering face pieces/dust masks do offer masks impregnated with activated charcoal for the purpose of providing comfort protection against nuisance odors. Contact your dust mask manufacturer for more information.

**2. Our employees wear dust masks for certain benchtop cutting and grinding tasks that can produce low levels of dust. Do we still have to do a hazard assessment?**

Yes. A fundamental feature of the OSHA Personal Protective Equipment rule (29 CFR 1910.132(d)) is that all applications of PPE are based on a simple hazard assessment. This is especially important when offering dust masks for voluntary use, since the hazard assessment is what establishes the rationale for using dust masks voluntarily as opposed to being required for protection against hazardous atmospheres.

**3. Where do I start with writing a respiratory protection program?**

The written document doesn't need to be complicated, but it must reflect your company's strategy for complying with the rule. Respiratory Protection Program information can be obtained from the [ICW Group RMRx online library](#) and from OSHA. In addition, your ICW Risk Management Consultant can assist you with getting your program started.

**4. Can you please repeat the info about the dust mask approval? I couldn't understand who the approval is from.**

It is important to ensure that your organization is using NIOSH (National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health) approved respiratory protection. All NIOSH approved filtering face pieces are required to have the "TC Approval Number" stenciled on some part of the mask. A listing of all NIOSH approved filtering face pieces can be found at:

[https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp\\_part/default.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/default.html)