

# Dust Masks and Respirators

## Dust Masks

- NOT a respirator
- Do NOT provide protection from particles
- Designed to protect **others** from larger debris expelled from the mouth
- Contaminants easily pass through due to large pore size
- Look for identification (N95, R95, etc.) If missing, is most likely NOT a respirator
- Dust masks will usually only have one strap, while respirators will have two.

## Respirators

- Can be disposable, half mask, or full mask
- Disposable types mistakenly called dust masks
- All respirators (even disposable) require fit testing
- Half Mask/Full Face require specific cartridges depending on the hazard



## Other important points:

- Gas masks have limitations. If cartridges are used for longer than designed, or a higher concentration of toxic chemical exists in the air than the cartridge is designed for, exposure to toxic chemicals could occur even while wearing the respirator
- Breathing in toxic chemicals is not the only means of exposure. Some airborne chemicals are also absorbed through the skin. Make sure you are wearing all appropriate personal protective equipment and not relying on the respirator alone.

Sources:

<http://www.coopersafety.com/respiratorytypes.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/factsheets/respfact.html>

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