

# Key Information About NIOSH Certified Respirators

Use with Chapter 296-842 WAC, Respirators



This tool will help you understand how to find and use NIOSH certification information.

## Why is NIOSH certification important?

NIOSH-certified respirators are rigorously checked and tested to make sure they can perform well and are suitable for workplace use. These assurances don't extend to respirators that aren't NIOSH certified.

## How do I know if a respirator has been NIOSH certified?

If the respirator is NIOSH certified, it'll have an approval label printed somewhere on the respirator, product box or in the user manual or other written materials contained in the box.

The label will include a "TC" number or a chart showing TC numbers that correspond to various respirator components that make up a certified assembly. In addition, important information about the respirator's capabilities and limitations for use will be included.

## How do I use TC numbers?

These numbers help you identify which cartridges, airline hoses, or other respirator parts are approved for a specific respirator assembly.

When replacing parts or making repairs, make sure you select only replacement parts listed under the TC number for the assembly chosen, otherwise, you will create a non-certified respirator assembly.

Each respirator assembly has one TC number. If more than one TC number is listed on the approval label, this means more than one NIOSH-certified assembly is available.

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<http://www.lni.wa.gov/>

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## Does NIOSH certification expire?

No. However, NIOSH certification is voided when:

- Users don't follow the approval label's use specifications, including listed cautions and limitations.
- Respirator parts used aren't listed under the respirator assembly's TC number.

NIOSH occasionally withdraws certification for a respirator assembly. When this happens, a user notice is posted on their website at [www.cdc.gov/niosh/respnotices.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/respnotices.html)

## What do the designations N, R, and P mean?

N, R, and P are NIOSH-certification categories that apply to non-powered air-purifying respirators designed to protect against hazardous particles. They do not apply to powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs).

You'll need to follow the use restrictions for these categories shown in Table HT-1 during respirator selection and use.

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Table HT-1 Use Restrictions for N, R, and P Respirator Categories	
Use	When
N	No oil is present in the air.
R	Oil is present, but only for a single shift or 8 hours of continuous or intermittent use.  <b>Note:</b> Reuse beyond a single shift or 8 hours is <b>not</b> recommended.
P	Oil is present, but follow the manufacturer's time use limitations if you want to reuse these.

For more information about limitations and capabilities associated with these categories, see the May 2, 1997 NIOSH Respirator User's Notice, "Letter to All Users of P-Series Particulate Respirators".

Visit: [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

## What do the designations 100, 99, and 95 mean?

These designations refer to the expected filter efficiency ratings of non-powered air-purifying respirators used to remove dusts, sprays, mists, fume, and other types of particles.

The higher the number, the higher the efficiency expected.

An efficiency rating of 95 means the filter is expected to trap 95 particles out of every 100. An efficiency rating of 100 is equivalent to that of a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter.

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## Can I still use particulate respirators certified for “dust” or “dust, fumes and mists”?

These types of air-purifying respirators were certified under NIOSH's former certification standard, 30 CFR Part 11 (replaced by 42 CFR Part 84 in 1995), and can no longer be sold for occupational use.

Furthermore, these respirators can be used in occupational settings only when the size of the particulate contaminant(s) involved is 2  $\mu\text{m}$  or larger. If the size of the particle contaminant is smaller, you'll need to use an N, R, or P series respirator instead.

## Where can I find NIOSH certification requirements?

NIOSH certification requirements are found in the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR); Title 42 CFR, Part 84, Respiratory Protective Devices.

You can find this CFR, in its entirety by visiting:  
<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/executive.html>