

How long does a filter last?

When to replace or change filters in the respirator.

Particulate Filters for reusable respirators and/or disposable/filtering facepiece respirators:

- ✓ When the breathing resistance becomes excessive to the wearer.
- ✓ If any damage occurs eg. broken strap, hole burnt in filtering facepiece etc.
- ✓ If it becomes unhygienic i.e. it has been coughed/sneezed into and the inside is in an unacceptable condition.

Combination filters (Particulate and Gas/vapour) for reusable respirators:

- ✓ As the capacity of each will depend on the airborne concentrations being filtered – it will fill at its own rate and need to be changed when full. This may be at a different rate to the other.
- ✓ The service life (ie how long will it perform) of any Gas & Vapour (G&V) cartridge is affected by many factors – capacity, concentration and identity of contaminants, breathing rates, humidity levels, ventilation, temperature, type of carbon etc.
- ✓ Smell and taste should NOT be used as a primary indicator for when to change a G&V cartridge.
- ✓ Some workplaces e.g. healthcare environments, may require facepieces/filters to be replaced after every use due to infection control procedures.
- ✓ Therefore, there is no specific timing involved and the frequency of replacement of products varies from task to task, situation to situation and product to product.



Every workplace is unique and needs to assess their specific situation to determine an adequate filter change schedule.

When a Gas & Vapour cartridge on reusable respirators have reached their capacity, it will no longer protect the wearer as the G&V will pass straight through to the wearer.

Particulate filters will keep removing contaminants but will become harder and harder to breathe through, increasing discomfort.

Shelf life of Filters & Cartridges

Provided they are stored unopened in the original packaging, 3M cartridges and filters have a shelf life of three or five years (depending on the product) from manufacture date.

Once any gas & vapour cartridge is removed from their packaging they should be replaced after six months as recommended by Australian / New Zealand Standard 1715 irrespective of the duration of use (even if they have not been used).