

Comfort Considerations When Picking Respiratory Protection

Respiratory protection may be necessary at your job, but there are many options out there designed to help comfortably protect you from the hazards you face. It's important to keep in mind that when making the choice of what type of respiratory protection to use that you also select products from a reputable manufacturer that offers science-based, innovative solutions, which comply with regulatory certification standards.

Whether you are considering disposable respirators (filtering facepiece respirators), reusable (elastomeric) options, powered air purifying respirators (PAPR), or even supplied air solutions, consulting with a reputable manufacturer to help you make your choice can be very helpful. Also, there are many comfort considerations and it helps to think them through with the help of a respiratory protection specialist. Let's learn a little bit more about some of the comfort benefits of different types of respiratory protection equipment.

Disposable Respirators (DR) also known as Filtering Facepiece Respirators (FFRs)

First, always look for a DR that has achieved CE certification to EN 149. There are models that have adjustable nose clips, nose foam, fixed headbands, adjustable buckle straps, and there are models that come in three-panel or flat-fold style for not just comfort but convenience. Many of these features are designed to help enhance comfort, and help you achieve a proper seal, in order to help deliver the level of protection this type of respirator is designed to achieve.

Some DRs offer an exhalation valve that can result in easier breathing than non-valved respirators. There are also disposable respirator options that contain no components made from natural rubber latex and filter media that are designed to be flame resistant. DRs are known for being a lightweight option and select products have filter media that is designed to help provide relief against certain nuisance-level odours.

DRs are disposable, convenient, economical, and can be used in many types of industries from healthcare to welding to mining and manufacturing, depending on the model you choose and the job you are doing. They can often be used in combination with other PPE such as eye protection, hearing protection, and protective apparel, such as coveralls.



Reusable Respirators (RR) Elastomerics

A big benefit of reusable respirators is protection and comfort at a reasonable price. There are reusable respirators to help meet the needs of many types of workers who want to be comfortable and protected whether they are in hot environments, tight spaces, or working long shifts. Half or full facepiece reusable respirators can help protect against both particles and/or gases and vapours that are used for numerous applications in hazardous environments. RR is engineered to help deliver comfort with a wide field of vision. For instance, there are full face RR models that feature a soft silicone nose cup and faceseal that help provide long wear-time comfort as well as a large visor that allows for excellent peripheral vision.

Like some DR models, RR offer a valve feature built in to help with easier breathing and comfort and some also have a passive speaking diaphragm that is positioned to promote easier communication capability. There is an option that offers a quick latch drop-down that makes it easy to don/doff in a non-contaminated area. There are even some RR models available that are compatible with other types of respiratory PPE like PAPRs and supplied air.

A disposable or reusable respirator can't give workers the protection it was designed to provide unless it is selected and worn correctly during all periods of exposure. Fit testing is an important part of a respiratory protection program and is a requirement in the UK. For more information please see HSE guidance document INDG 479. .



Powered & Supplied Air

A Powered Air Respirator system uses a turbo instead of lung power to draw air through the filter. This can help with ease of breathing for workers while feeling a constant airflow in your headtop, which can help provide additional comfort if you happen to be working in hot and humid environments. Integrated face shields on certain headtops for specific Powered Air Respirator systems help protect eyes and faces from debris, sparks, and other hazards. At the same time, these respirator options may offer a wide field of vision, helping to make it easier to see your surroundings and perform the necessary tasks at hand.

With some respirator systems, beards and facial hair can be a problem, as they can interfere with the seal of certain facepieces. There are Powered Air Respirator systems available with headtops designed to accommodate limited facial hair, enabling additional protection options for your employees. This can also benefit workers who want to keep their facial hair for medical, religious, style, or other reasons.



We're Here to Help You Pick a Comfortable Respiratory Protection Option

So, as you can see, there are a wide variety of innovative technologies and features designed to enhance user comfort and help promote wear time for every type of respiratory protection product. Let us help you find comfort options that work for you. For help selecting respiratory protection equipment, please do not hesitate to reach out to our respiratory protection specialists for assistance today.



Disposable Respirators

Comfortable and convenient, the **3M™ Aura™ Particulate Respirator, 9300+ Series** features a 3-panel design that fits a wide range of face shapes and sizes, which accommodating facial movements to let you work and talk freely.



Reusable Respirators

Equipped with a push button seal check that helps provide improved confidence in respirator fit, the **3M™ Secure Click™ Half Mask Reusable Respirator, HF-800 Series** is designed with smart and intuitive features to help protect workers from airborne contaminants.



Powered Air Respirators

If you're looking for versatility, convenience and high efficiency particulate filtration, the **3M™ Versaflo™ Powered Air Purifying Respirator, TR-300+ Series** can help you meet the goals of your respiratory protection programme while ensuring a comfortable airflow.

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