“Dust Mask” vs. Respirator

It is quite common to see “nuisance” dust masks get confused with particulate respirators. Both of these items may look very similar, but they have very important differences! If you wear a respirator in the workplace, make sure you know the difference and that you are wearing the appropriate equipment.

Particulate respirators are approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). This approval is required if you are required to wear a respirator at work. The NIOSH approval notice is stamped on the front of particulate respirators. “Nuisance” dust masks are not NIOSH-approved and do not have any stamps or markings on them.

**N-95 Respirators:** Tested to provide at least 95% filtering efficiency

**P-100 Respirators:** Tested to provide at least 99.7% filtering efficiency

**No NIOSH Approval:** Untested or unknown efficiency rating