

# COUNTERFEIT RESPIRATORY PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

## Introduction

Some companies are taking advantage of the increased global demand for respirators and are marketing counterfeit and substandard respirators as being approved by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) or by other international standards.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is increased global demand for respirators, particularly N95 disposable respirators approved by NIOSH. Many jurisdictions, including NIOSH and [Health Canada](#) have recognized respirators meeting other international performance standards which provide equivalent protection to NIOSH approved equipment, provided the respirators are properly fit tested. Two of these include KN95 and FFP2 respirators meeting Chinese and European standards GB2626-2006 and EN 149:2001+A1:2009, respectively.

## Identifying counterfeit and substandard respirators

Counterfeit respirators are products that are falsely marketed and sold as being approved by NIOSH or approved to some other acceptable international standard. These counterfeit respirators are not certified as being capable of providing appropriate respiratory protection to workers.

NIOSH has identified a number of red flags that may identify a respirator as counterfeit including:

- no NIOSH markings
- NIOSH spelled incorrectly
- presence of decorative fabric or other decorative add-ons (for example, sequins)

When NIOSH becomes aware of counterfeit respirators, the products are posted on [Counterfeit Respirators / Misrepresentation of NIOSH-Approval](#). This webpage also provides additional information regarding counterfeit NIOSH approval.

Substandard KN95 respirators have also been identified. These respirators do not demonstrate a 95 per cent filtration rate. The Centre for Disease Control is testing many of these and the results are available on the [NPPTL Respirator Assessments to Support the COVID-19 Response](#) page. Health Canada has also published [a list of respirator recalls](#).

- NIOSH offers a webinar that discusses what to watch for when [purchasing respirators from another country](#).

## Safe use

In addition to the quality of the product, the safe use of respiratory protective equipment depends on several factors including proper selection and fit testing. For more information on requirements for respirator use in the workplace, see [Respiratory Protective Equipment: An Employer's Guide](#).

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## What to do if you suspect a counterfeit or substandard respirator

If an employer suspects or identifies that a mask is fraudulent or substandard, they must stop using it and should [report information](#) on the potential false or misleading advertising or sale of unauthorized products to Health Canada.

Note that the pandemic is a developing situation and information is frequently changing. Employers should refer to the Health Canada website for a detailed discussion on many of the current issues related to the safe use of disposable respirators, including issues related to fraudulent and unauthorized respirators. Read:

- [Fraudulent and unauthorized N95 respirators may not protect consumers against COVID-19](#)
- [Important safety information for certain respirator masks](#)

Go to [alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19) for the most up-to-date information on restrictions to contain COVID-19.

## For more information

### Counterfeit Respirators / Misrepresentation of NIOSH-Approval

[cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html](https://cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html)

### Factors to Consider when Planning to Purchase Respirators from Another Country, Including KN95 Respirators from China

[cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/webinars/Webinar-Factors-To-Consider.html](https://cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/webinars/Webinar-Factors-To-Consider.html)

### Fraudulent and unauthorized N95 respirators may not protect consumers against COVID-19

[healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2020/72707a-eng.php](https://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2020/72707a-eng.php)

### Important safety information for certain respirator masks

[healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2020/73063a-eng.php](https://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/hc-sc/2020/73063a-eng.php)

### NPPTL Respirator Assessments to Support the COVID-19 Response

[cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respirators/testing/NonNIOSHresults.html](https://cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respirators/testing/NonNIOSHresults.html)

### Optimizing the use of masks and respirators during the COVID-19 outbreak

[canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-devices/masks-respirators-covid19.html](https://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/medical-devices/masks-respirators-covid19.html)

### Report a health and safety concern

[canada.ca/en/services/health/report-health-safety-concern.html](https://canada.ca/en/services/health/report-health-safety-concern.html)

### Respiratory Protective Equipment: An Employer's Guide

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/ppe001](https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/ppe001)

## Contact us

### OHS Contact Centre

Report serious incidents, make immediate danger complaints, ask OHS questions

Anywhere in Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

### Online Incident Reporting

Potentially serious, mine or mine site incidents

[oir.labour.alberta.ca](https://oir.labour.alberta.ca)

### Alberta Health Services

COVID-19 public health order violations

[ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case](https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case)

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