



Photo by NIOSH

Photo by NIOSH

# Informing Workers of Counterfeit and Misrepresented Respirators

- Millions of U.S. workers rely on respirators in fields like healthcare, construction, public safety, and mining.
- Workers use respirators to prevent exposures to respiratory hazards such as silica dust, chemical agents, and infectious particles.
- Counterfeit or misrepresented respirators may not provide the advertised level of protection, putting workers at risk.

## Understanding Counterfeit and Misrepresented Respirators

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is responsible for the testing and approval of respirators used in U.S. workplaces. NIOSH's approval standards ensure that respirators meet the necessary safety and performance requirements for use in workplaces. When respiratory protection is necessary in a workplace, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires the use of NIOSH Approved respirators. [Counterfeit and misrepresented respirators](#) have not been approved by NIOSH and may not provide you the advertised level of protection.

- Counterfeit respirators are products that try to copy an actual NIOSH Approved model.
- Misrepresented respirators are falsely marketed and sold as NIOSH Approved respirators when they are not.

## Identifying NIOSH Approved® Respirators

The NIOSH approval label and markings on a respirator and its filter or cartridge are key to identifying whether it is approved by NIOSH. The approval label informs users of the testing and certification (TC) approval number (e.g., TC-84A-XXXX, TC-23C-XXXX) for a respirator. For FFRs, the approval number will also appear on the facepiece or one of the straps.

Users can search the NIOSH [Certified Equipment List \(CEL\)](#) using the TC approval number. The CEL is the official listing of all NIOSH Approved respirators. It is the easiest way to confirm that a product is approved by NIOSH. If a TC approval number does not return a result within the CEL, it is not a valid approval number, and the product is not approved by NIOSH.

NIOSH provides users tips to help them [identify NIOSH Approved respirators](#).

## Proper Markings NIOSH Approved Filtering Facepiece Respirator (FFR)

### Approval Holder

Name or logo of approval holder. If private labeled, the private label name or logo will appear instead of the approval holder information

### TC Approval Number (TC-84A-XXXX)

Required to appear on the facepiece or straps

### NIOSH

NIOSH in capital block letters

Illustration by NIOSH

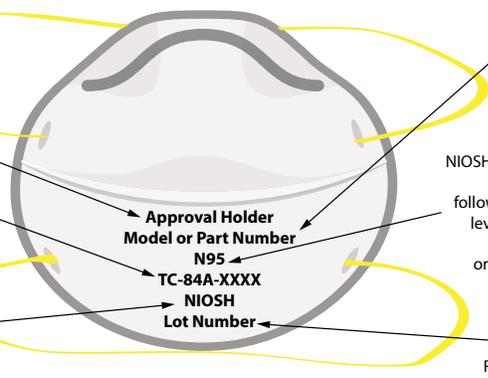
### Model or Part # XXXX

### Protection Type

NIOSH filter series includes an alphanumerical rating followed by a filter efficiency level (e.g., N95, N99, N100, R95, P95, P100) or Surgical N95 Respirator (when applicable)

### Lot # XXXX

Recommended, but not required (location may vary; could be on facepiece, packaging, user instructions)



Exterior View



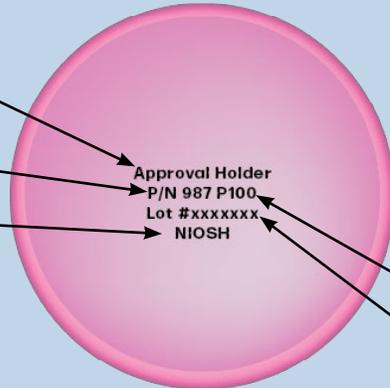
U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

# Proper Markings - Filters and Cartridges

NIOSH has identified many filters and combination chemical/filter cartridges being sold on well-known online marketplaces that claim to be P100® filters or claim to have chemical and P100 protection that are not part of a NIOSH Approved respirator configuration.

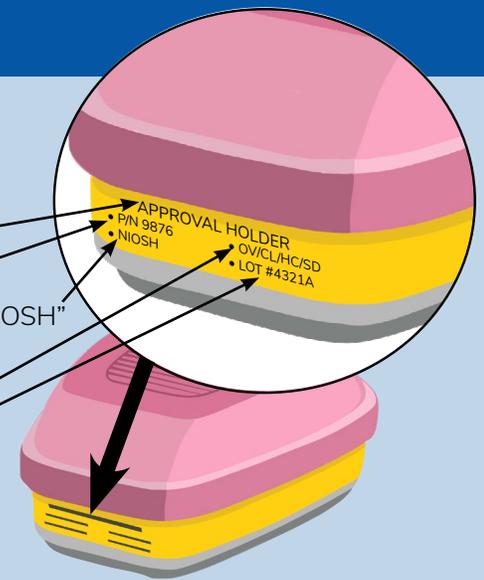
When purchasing P100 filters and chemical/filter cartridges, make sure they have the proper markings.

- Approval holder's name
- Part number
- The acronym "NIOSH"



Illustrations by NIOSH

- Approval holder
- Part number
- The acronym "NIOSH"
- Protection (e.g., OV/CL/HC/SD)
- Lot number



- Protections/filter series (e.g., P100)
- Lot number (location may vary; could be on filter, packaging, user instructions)

## Tips to Consider When Purchasing Respirators

Users should always make sure they purchase respirators from reputable sources. Check for authorized distributors before buying respirators from third-party marketplaces or unfamiliar websites.

### When evaluating third-party marketplaces:

- Be skeptical of claims like "legitimate" and "genuine"
- Beware of products that highlight part numbers and that avoid using an approval holder's name
- Check if the seller consistently offers the same products over time, not just trending items
- Monitor frequent price changes
- Beware of sellers advertising "unlimited stock" during shortages
- Ensure the seller adheres to marketplace policies and provides contact information
- Review transaction history and customer feedback
- Beware of products that have decorative fabric or other decorative add-ons (e.g., sequins)
- Beware of claims that a product is approved for children (NIOSH has not approved respirators for children at this time)
- Beware of claims that a filter or cartridge can be used on a NIOSH Approved respirator

### When evaluating websites:

- Verify if the contact email is linked to the website, not a free email service
- Watch for bad grammar, typos, mixed-up names/logos, unfinished content, blank pages, broken links, and other errors
- Be cautious of misspelled domain names (domain squatting)

## Reporting Counterfeit or Misrepresented Respirators

If you suspect you have a counterfeit or misrepresented respirator, contact NIOSH at [ppeconcerns@cdc.gov](mailto:ppeconcerns@cdc.gov). Please provide the following details with your email:

- The company name on the respirator
- Respirator model or part number
- Photos of the respirator and packaging
- NIOSH approval number (e.g., TC-84A-XXXX, TC-21C-XXXX), if present
- Web URL where respirator was purchased or found