SCOPE:

This Technical Guide applies to all employees that voluntarily use a dust mask (filtering facepiece respirator) as part of their job tasks. An employee may voluntarily use a dust mask, including an “N95 respirator,” to avoid breathing nuisance dust. Examples include working in a woodshop, handling uncontaminated soil, or working with small quantities of non-hazardous dust forming powders.

Employees who are required to wear a dust mask or other types of respirators must comply with additional rules outlined in the Michigan Tech Respiratory Protection Program. (www.mtu.edu/ehs/programs/respiratory)

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PROCEDURES:

The following must be completed before an employee uses a dust mask, and must be repeated on an annual basis or whenever the nature or amount of dust changes.

Supervisor Requirements:

When an employee voluntarily wishes to use a dust mask their supervisor must:
- Complete a written hazard analysis and keep a copy in the laboratory or workplace binder. This hazard analysis must confirm:
  - Appropriate engineering controls are being utilized to control dust exposure;
  - The exposure is limited to nuisance dust and there is no potential for exposure to hazardous vapors, liquids, or chemicals;
  - A dust mask, or another respirator, is not required as a protective measure but is being provided for voluntary comfort use only.
- Contact the Department’s PureSafety training coordinator and request that the employee be enrolled in the PureSafety module “Dust Mask-Voluntary Use Guidelines.”
- Train the employee on the proper selection, storage, and use of a dust mask.
- Make the employee aware of Michigan Tech’s Respiratory Protection Program.
• Review with the employee and answer any questions about Appendix D of the Respiratory Protection Program.

Employee Requirements:

When an employee voluntarily wishes to use a dust mask, the employee must:
• Complete the module “Dust Mask - Voluntary Use Guidelines” in the University’s online training system (Pure Safety).
• Pass the quiz at the end of the module “Dust Mask - Voluntary Use Guidelines.”

Employee and Supervisor Documentation Requirements:

Both the employee and supervisor must
• Read, sign, and date the copy of the “Appendix D with signature page” located at the end of this Technical Guide.
• Make a copy of “Appendix D with signature page” for the laboratory or workplace binder and forward the signed original to Environmental Health and Safety by campus mail.

REGULATIONS / COMPLIANCE:

Regulations on voluntary dust mask use fall under MIOSHA PART 451. RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE:

Laboratory Compliance - Jeff Lewin, David Dixon, Courtney Holzberger
Other Employee Compliance - Scot Wendt, Chris Maxson

REFERENCES/SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

Michigan Tech Respiratory Protection Plan

Additional information from Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs
Respiratory Protection Program: Appendix D with signature page

Information for Employees Using Respirators When Not Required Under the Standard

Voluntary use of filtering facepieces (dust masks) is not subject to the medical evaluation, cleaning, storage, and maintenance provisions of the Michigan Technological University Respiratory Protection Program. Employees voluntarily using filtering facepieces must be provided with, read, and understand the information below.

Respirators are an effective method of protection against designated hazards when properly selected and worn. Respirator use is encouraged, even when exposures are below the exposure limit, to provide an additional level of comfort and protection for workers. However, if a respirator is used improperly or not kept clean, the respirator itself can become a hazard to the worker. Sometimes, workers may wear respirators to avoid exposures to hazards, even if the amount of hazardous substance does not exceed the limits set by OSHA standards. If your employer provides respirators for your voluntary use, or if you provide your own respirator, you need to take certain precautions to be sure that the respirator itself does not present a hazard. You should do the following:

1. Read and heed all instructions provided by the manufacturer on use, maintenance, cleaning and care, and warnings regarding the respirators limitations.
2. Choose respirators certified for use to protect against the contaminant of concern. NIOSH, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, certifies respirators. A label or statement of certification should appear on the respirator or respirator packaging. It will tell you what the respirator is designed for and how much it will protect you.
3. Do not wear your respirator into atmospheres containing contaminants for which your respirator is not designed to protect against. For example, a respirator designed to filter dust particles will not protect you against gases, vapors, or very small solid particles of fumes or smoke.
4. Keep track of your respirator so that you do not mistakenly use someone else’s respirator.

I have completed the Pure Safety online training module "Dust Mask - Voluntary Use Guidelines." I have read and I understand the information provided above regarding the limitations and use of particle filtering facepieces (dust masks).

__________________________  ________________  ________________
Employee name (print clearly)   Employee Signature   Date

I have completed a workplace hazard assessment and approve the voluntary use of a particle filtering facepiece under Michigan Tech’s Respiratory Protection Program.

__________________________  ________________  ________________
Supervisor Name (print clearly)   Supervisor Signature   Date