

If the hazard is particles, you will need to choose the right filter based on the particulate hazard. NIOSH has 12 different filter designations. Nine designations are used for negative-pressure respirator filters and three apply to filters used on powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs). Negative-pressure respirators rely on the wearer breathing in and creating negative pressure inside the respirator to pull air through the cartridge or filter. PAPRs use a blower to move air through the cartridge or filter and to the wearer.

The negative-pressure filter categories are based on a combination of two factors:

- ☑ Resistance to oily mists (N, R or P)
- ☑ Filter efficiency (95, 99 or 100)

N Series

- ☒ NOT RESISTANT TO OIL
- ☑ N95, N99, N100
- ☑ Filters at least 95%, 99% or 99.97% of airborne particles



R Series

- ☒ SOMEWHAT RESISTANT TO OIL
- ☑ R95, R99, R100
- ☑ Filters at least 95%, 99% or 99.97% of airborne particles



P Series

- ☑ STRONGLY RESISTANT TO OIL / OIL PROOF
- ☑ P95, P99, P100
- ☑ Filters at least 95%, 99% or 99.97% of airborne particles



PAPR Filters: For powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs), there are three NIOSH designations for particulate filters, HEPA (HE), PAPR100-P and PAPR100-N. A PAPR100-N filter is not oil resistant. HE and PAPR100-P are oil proof. All three filter out at least 99.97% of airborne particles.

Oils: For when products containing oil (like fuel, lubricating or hydraulic oils, solvents, paints and pesticides) are sprayed or used in processes producing aerosols or droplets, the oil component may become airborne.

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