



## Workplace Safety: Counterfeit Respirators Grow as Demand for PPE Outpaces Supply

Counterfeit respirators are respirators that are falsely marketed and sold as having been approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The number of counterfeit respirators is growing as demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) outpaces supply. In approval testing that took place from the beginning of April through early May, NIOSH tested 90 models of N95 respirators submitted for approval. Nearly **60%** of those respirators submitted for approval **failed** to meet NIOSH standards.

Reasons for failure of approval can range from the respirator being unable to filter the percentage of particulate as advertised (95% for an N95) to head straps pulling off the respirator. Some manufacturers are producing N95s with ear loops as opposed to head straps. NIOSH currently does not approve respirators that use ear loops because they have been unable to obtain any models that can pass fit testing requirements. Counterfeit respirators frequently do not pass fit testing requirements due to lower quality materials and/or poor manufacturing processes.

When trying to obtain respirators, also beware that third parties (not manufacturers) are claiming to have access to large quantities of PPE from reputable manufacturers. These third parties take orders and pressure customers to pay in advance in order to secure their order. Payments are made, and then no products are provided.

If you have a client searching for respirators, please refer them to the NIOSH website page with photographs and examples of counterfeit respirators [here](#). NIOSH is updating the site periodically, so please check back from time to time.

PMA is here to support you during these unprecedented times. Should you need additional assistance, please feel free to email [heretohelp@pmagroup.com](mailto:heretohelp@pmagroup.com).



*The above mask is an example of a product with an ear loop that does not meet NIOSH's standards.*