

# AVIAN INFLUENZA

## RESPIRATORY EXPOSURES

### for Poultry Workers



Information provided is intended as general guidelines for exposures.

## AVIAN INFLUENZA IN POULTRY

Avian Influenza is a disease caused by a group of viruses that are very effective at spreading among birds. It is spread through contact with infected birds, specifically:

- Fecal droppings
- Saliva
- Nasal discharges

The risk to the general public's health from bird flu viruses is low. However, people that have job-related or recreational exposures to birds are at higher risk of infection. Anyone exposed to infected birds should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).

**Sick birds or unusual bird deaths should be reported to State/Federal officials either through the state veterinarian or through USDA's toll-free number at 1-866-536-7593.**



**Learn more about Avian Influenza**

USDA: Avian Influenza Website

## RESPIRATORY EXPOSURES

Working in affected poultry facilities involves exposures to dust, toxic gases, and disinfecting chemicals, in addition to the avian influenza virus. It is important to select respiratory protection for all of these exposures.

### AVIAN INFLUENZA & PARTICULATES (DUST)

Appropriate respiratory protection for **avian influenza and particulates (dusts)** is a NIOSH-approved particulate filtering respirator. All NIOSH-approved filter classes are appropriate (N, R, or P class with 95, 99, or 100 percent efficiencies). As shown, disposable 2-strap filtering facepiece respirators (Mask 1), half-face respirators (Masks 2 & 3), or full face respirators are suitable (Mask 4).



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## HAZARDOUS GASES & VAPORS

Hazardous gases and vapors are commonly found in poultry buildings. **Ammonia** levels may be high during manure and litter removal, building clean-out, and composting of carcasses and litter. Respiratory protection should include ammonia or multi-gas cartridges approved for ammonia (Masks 3 and 4).

## CLEANING & DISINFECTING COMPOUNDS

Cleaning and disinfecting compounds contain ingredients that can be harmful to breathing. These may include aldehydes, ammonia compounds, acids, alcohols, and other ingredients. Select a combination cartridge that includes both the appropriate gas component (from cleaning compound label) and particulate filters (Pink cover shown in masks 3 & 4).



**Effective ventilation and use of respirators with multi-gas cartridges and P100 filters are recommended when any of these gases and dusts may be present. A particulate filtering respirator with only an N95 or P100 filter or cartridge is effective for dust and viruses, but it does not protect against hazardous gases.**



**Use cleaning and disinfecting products only as directed. Some cleaning or disinfecting compounds may react with ammonia in litter to produce hazardous gases. Mixing cleaning or disinfecting products together can produce toxic gases. Consult the product label or manufacturer for additional information.**

## IMPORTANT RESPIRATOR USE INFORMATION

### WHEN TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

- Talk to your healthcare provider before wearing a respirator if you have a history of heart or lung disease.
- If you experience respiratory symptoms (examples: shortness of breath, wheezing, cough, chest tightness) during or after working with poultry, stop your work, exit the building, remove your respirator, and call your health care provider.

### HOW A RESPIRATOR SHOULD FIT

- Respirators should be used in accordance with manufacturer instructions.
- Improperly fitted respirators do not provide the intended protection. Respirators should be fit-tested when possible. A respirator seal check (fit check) should be performed each time a respirator is worn. [Learn more about fit testing.](#)
- A clean-shaven face should be maintained for the best fit and protection. A powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR) with a loose-fitting facepiece, hood, or helmet can be worn by individuals with facial hair.

### HOW TO CREATE A RESPIRATOR PROGRAM

- Information on respirator programs is available in the OSHA resource [Small Entity Compliance Guide for the Respiratory Protection Standard.](#)



**Respirators reduce exposure to airborne contaminants but do not completely get rid of the risk of exposure, infection, illness, or death.**