

# Avian Influenza/Bird Flu

## PPE and Respiratory Protection Guidelines for Poultry Workers



### Avian Influenza/Bird Flu Outbreak

Bird flu is a disease caused by a group of viruses that are particularly effective at spreading among birds. Bird flu is spread through contact with fecal droppings, saliva, and nasal discharges of sick birds. More information on bird flu can be found on the **USDA** website ([aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza](https://aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza)).

The general public is at low risk for catching bird flu. However, people who work with birds or spend a lot of time around them may be at higher risk. Anyone around sick birds should wear personal protective equipment (PPE).



**This information is intended as general guidelines for exposures.**

**Anyone that will be in contact with sick birds or affected operations should check:**



**USDA Website**

[aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza](https://aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza)



**CDC Website**

[cdc.gov/bird-flu/](https://cdc.gov/bird-flu/)

**Sick birds or unusual bird deaths should be reported to State/Federal officials through:**



**The state veterinarian**

**or**



**USDA's toll-free number 1-866-536-7593**

402-552-3394

[go.unmc.edu/cs-cash/cs-cash-contact](https://go.unmc.edu/cs-cash/cs-cash-contact)

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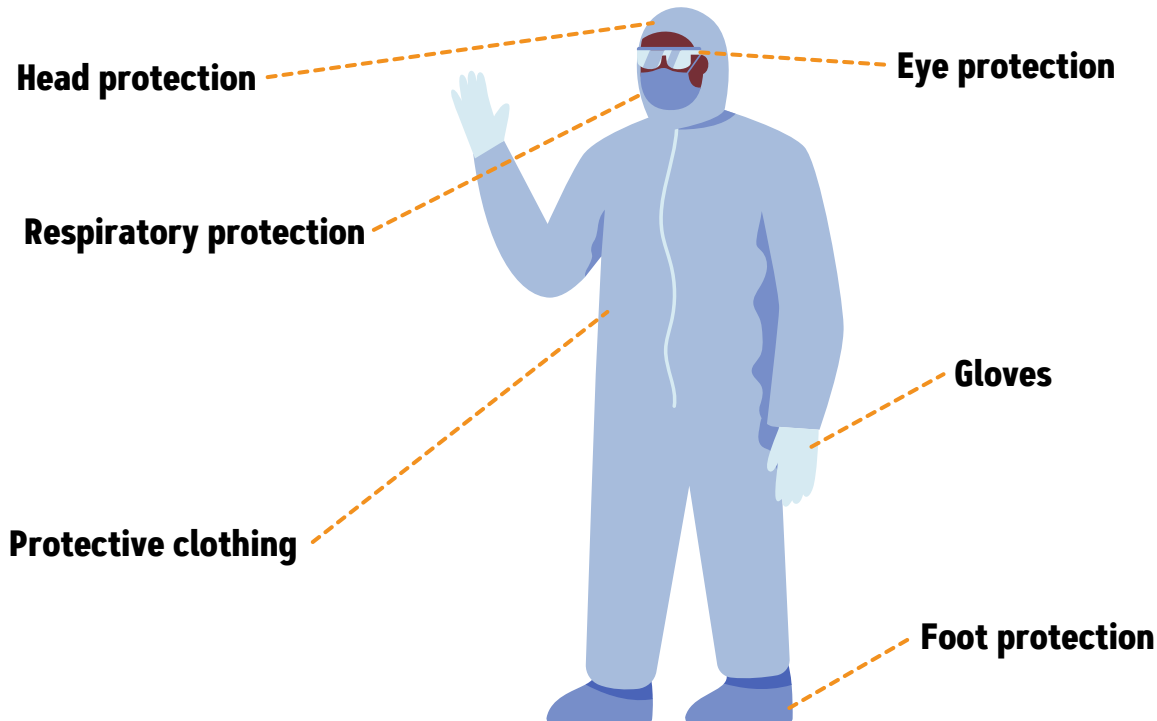
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## PPE for Monitoring Bird Health

When monitoring bird health, the following PPE helps prevent the spread of Bird Flu:

- **Head protection:** disposable headcover or hair cover
- **Eye protection:** properly fitted unvented or indirectly vented safety goggles
- **Respirators:** minimum respiratory protection is a NIOSH-approved N95 disposable particulate respirator
- **Protective clothing:** disposable coveralls or coveralls that can be disinfected
- **Gloves:** disposable nitrile or neoprene gloves that can be disinfected
- **Foot protection:** disposable coverings or boots that can be disinfected



## PPE for Depopulation, Removal, and Composting

These tasks may involve exposure to ammonia. Additional respiratory and eye protection is needed. Wear the same as above, plus...

- **Respirator:** half mask or full facepiece respirator with P100 filters and ammonia or multi-gas cartridges
- **Eye Protection:** unvented goggles or full facepiece respirator

## PPE for Cleaning and Disinfecting

These tasks involve exposure to chemicals. Wear the same as above, plus...

- **Respirator:** half mask or full facepiece respirator with a combination of P100 filters and multi-gas cartridges are appropriate for many disinfectants
- **Eye Protection:** unvented goggles or full facepiece respirator

 **Always check the product label for recommendations.**

# Respiratory Exposures

Working in facilities with sick birds involves exposure to dust, harmful gases, cleaning chemicals, and the bird flu virus. It's important to wear respiratory protection for all of these things.

- Protect yourself from bird flu and particulates (dusts) with 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). The **National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory** ([cdc.gov/niosh/npptl](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl)) offers a variety of resources to help you identify NIOSH-approved PPE. Disposable 2-strap filtering facepiece respirators (Mask 1), half-face respirators (Masks 2 & 3), or full face respirators are suitable (Mask 4).
- Hazardous gases and vapors are usually found in poultry buildings. Ammonia levels can be high during manure and litter removal, building clean-out, and composting of carcasses and litter. Protect yourself with a mask that includes ammonia or multi-gas cartridges approved for ammonia (Masks 3 & 4).
- Cleaning and disinfecting products contain ingredients that can harm your lungs. These may include aldehydes, ammonia compounds, acids, alcohols, and other ingredients. Protect yourself with a combination cartridge that includes the appropriate gas component (from cleaning product label) and particulate filters (pink cover shown in Masks 3 & 4).



**Caution:** 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.



**Warning:** 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.

## Instructional Videos:

### Respirator Fit Testing



[youtu.be/Syj\\_zeNtLGI](https://youtu.be/Syj_zeNtLGI)

### Choosing a Respirator



<https://youtu.be/ObXy5GKpeko>

### Caring for your Respirator



[youtu.be/V3GK4ru96vg](https://youtu.be/V3GK4ru96vg)

# Respiratory Protection Quick Tips



You should consult your healthcare provider before wearing respiratory protection if you have history of heart or lung disease.

Respiratory protection reduces exposure to airborne contaminants, but does not completely get rid of the risk of exposure, infection, illness, or death.



Respirators should be used in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

Information on respirator programs is available in OSHA's **Small Entity Compliance Guide for the Respiratory Protection Standard**

[osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/3384small-entity-for-respiratory-protection-standard-rev.pdf](https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/3384small-entity-for-respiratory-protection-standard-rev.pdf)



Respirators that do not fit correctly will 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.

Faces need to be clean-shaven 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.



If you experience respiratory symptoms (such as 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 healthcare provider.

## Bird Flu Resources

CDC



[cdc.gov/bird-flu/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/bird-flu/index.html)

APHIS



[aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza](https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza)

OSHA



[osha.gov/avian-flu](https://www.osha.gov/avian-flu)

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