

# 3M v Trend

How does 3M's 7502 half-mask fare against Trend's AirAce for comfort and convenience

**W**e currently have two proper dust masks in the workshop.

Obviously there's a scattering of disposable paper and cloth ones, but the two we've been using most often are Trend's AirAce and 3M's 7502 mask, which was recommended to us by a reader. Both have P2 filters, which the techies at 3M tell us provides 10 times the legislated workplace exposure limit to dust. A P3 filter offers yet longer protection, but is that much more expensive.

Assuming that the filters are what they say, and do what they claim (which is a fair assumption), testing a dust mask generally comes down to comfort. There are a few notable points woodworkers will always check when they buy a new mask, particularly the seal

around the nose, and the steaming effect the mask has upon goggles or glasses. The seal on both is good, but Steve Prescott noticed that the rubber around the bridge of the nose is much thicker on the 3M than the Trend, and makes it a little bit more awkward to wear glasses. It lifts the glasses away from your face. Steve doesn't think the Trend is ideal either, mainly because the casing that houses the filter is bulky and quite difficult to peer over. That said, he prefers them both to disposal cloth masks.

So dusty was the oak Steve has been planing for his huge dresser, that he's been wearing a mask all the time. However, it was while working on doors for his dresser that he made a more interesting observation. Air that you exhale from the 3M mask



leaves by a duct at the front, very much like a proper nose. Condensation builds up on the plastic sides of this duct and then drips down onto the workpiece. If you're planing or doing rough work this isn't an issue, but can cause real problems on fine work. In the

Trend's case the condensation builds up on the casing, but doesn't drip down. For that reason the Trend shades it.



*Dripping* Condensation builds up in the 'nose' of the 3M mask, and can then drip down on your work. Otherwise the mask is comfortable and the straps are easy to adjust

