

Trend Airace safety respirator

The dangers of the inhalation of certain types of wood dust are now well known. And yet it would seem that woodworkers are slow to take heed of the dangers and take appropriate safety action. Maybe this is due to the fact that some safety devices are expensive, awkward to use or simply don't work very well. To help combat this, Trend produce a safety dust mask with a replaceable filter system called the Airace.

The Airace mainly comprises of a plastic grill that holds a disposable filter in place over a soft rubber facemask, which in turn fits over the mouth and nose of the wearer. The filter offers five times a larger surface area than most average disposable masks. A one-way exhaust rubber facemask really does appear to mould itself around the users lower face. Although, those with a particularly bushy beard and/or sideburns may experience a little difficulty in obtaining a good seal.

The Airace is retained to the face by elastic straps. These prove very straightforward to fit and are readily adjustable. In fact, putting the mask on and adjusting the fit takes just a few short seconds. Unless you are really into the Darth Vader look, the wearer may be concerned about the comfort factor of such a seemingly large protruding facemask. However, the Airace is lightweight and you will find that the novelty of wearing the mask is soon forgotten as you concentrate on the job in hand. During testing, we found that the mask formed a very good seal around the mouth, breathing normally proved satisfactory and the filter appeared to prevent wood dust from being inhaled by the wearer. Some dust masks form either a poor fit around the wearer's nose or are badly designed so that spectacles, or safety

valve vents at the bottom of the mask and helps to keep the filter dry and prevent glasses or goggles from fogging up. The electrostatic filters have been designed to last ten times the life of a regular disposable filter and to protect the wearer from hazardous toxic dust particles, metal fumes and mist to classification P2. For us woodies, this means that it will filter down to 0.3 microns and so can be used when working MDF. The Airace is supplied with two filters as standard and a neat little storage case can be bought as a separate accessory if you don't want to use a plastic lunchbox.

A little red test plug is supplied to ensure that a good face fit is obtained. This proved to work well and the soft rubber goggles/glasses, mist up rapidly. Fortunately there are no worries on this front, as the Airace is excellent for use with optical aids. During testing, the Airace proved to be fairly comfortable, but after an hour or two it did seem to chafe the bridge of the wearers nose a tad.

A variety of accessories are available for the Airace, including a clip on visor for medium protection against high-speed particles; and an intriguing active charcoal pre-filter for use on odours and smells below occupational levels only. So those engaged in animal husbandry for a hobby, may find these a real boon!



Verdict A good contribution to woodworking safety

Price Airace safety respirator £25-95 (ex VAT)

Ace/1 Spare P2 filter (1 off) £2.50 (ex VAT)

Ace/15 Spare P2 filter (5 off) £12.00 (ex VAT)

Ace/2 Nuisance filter £3.00 (ex VAT)

Ace/3 Clip on visor £12.95 (ex VAT)

Ace/6 Plastic storage box £6.95 (ex VAT)

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