



CLEARING THE AIR

Roger Bisby breathes easy in the Air Stealth Personal Safety Respirator from Trend Routing Technology.

I have looked at a number of respirator masks over the last 12 months and, though I might not yet be an expert, I have built up a list of must-have features for this type of half mask. It goes without saying that a mask must be comfortable, otherwise you are not going to wear it when you should and, because faces vary in size and shape, there has to be a number of sizes available. A mask must also have a means of testing the fit – otherwise particles can creep in around the nose and chin. It should also offer low resistance because you don't want to be gasping lungs fulls of air through a dense filter but (and here is the tricky bit) that filter still has to work to a very high standard.

Sizing

The Stealth P3R Respirator is made of a non-siliconised rubber that is malleable enough to fit around most faces, provided you select the right size. The one-piece strap is nice and wide so it won't dig in and the two-hook mechanism is very easy to use by feel alone. If you have a beard you have to accept that the fit is going to be compromised, and the only way around this is to use a positive pressure fan assisted respirator.

Many masks have a mechanism for testing the fit. The idea is to

close off the inlet or the outlet to see if the mask holds pressure or leaks out the sides. With the Stealth there is no mechanism as such, so you just have to cup the outlet with your hand and breathe out. As a test method I found this a bit hit and miss. Having said that you can get a fair idea of the fit just by feel, and once you have pulled the straps a little tighter any air gaps should disappear. If your glasses steam up the air is leaking around the nose. Take care not to overtighten the straps because that can make the mask uncomfortable, and the idea is that you should wear this mask almost without feeling it. It helps greatly that this is a lightweight mask, and a lot of that is due to the fact that the filters are not bolt on affairs but sit hidden within the mask shell. This also means that you won't knock them all the time if you are working in tight spaces. You can understand why they call this the Stealth mask.

It is claimed that this mask boasts the lowest breathing resistance of any mask in its class.

This is a claim I am going to have to take at face value (no pun intended) because I don't have the equipment to test such a thing. The resistance is measured on the outlet rather than the inlet because filters obviously start to clog up. It

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is hoped that you replace the filters long before this happens, and that is very easy to do. The two HEPAC filters are not encased, so you can open up the clam shell and see just how much rubbish they have picked up. The downside of this is that they need to be handled carefully when changing them. Place the used filters in a polythene bag and dispose of them safely, particularly if you have been working with asbestos or lead paint.

Apart from woodworking and construction, Stealth also recommends this mask for sports and leisure and I have seen a number of city cyclists wearing it – probably because it has the sleekest lines of any mask out there and looks very cool. You look like you are going fast even when you are standing still. If you do use it for aerobic work you will notice a steady stream of moisture leaking from that downward facing outlet valve. This is not a fault – the moisture in your breath has to go somewhere and down is better than up.

Another thing I have learned over the years is to store my mask in a polythene bag or plastic tub. There is no point throwing it in the back of the van where it will pick up dust on the inside. If it does get dirty you can remove the filters and give the whole thing a good wash but not when you are wearing it.

*For more information on the Air Stealth Personal Safety Respirator from Trend Routing Technology use the reader enquiry number below
Circle readerlink 139*

