



# HEALTH WORKERS BEWARE!

**YOUR MASK MAY BE A FAKE.**

**FIGHT BACK NOW**

**To help protect the health and safety of healthcare workers and patients, the following information is being provided to all HPAE members.**

It has been brought to HPAE's attention that counterfeit N95s are being distributed in healthcare facilities. These fakes visually look just like the common 3M teal-colored, cup-shaped N95 respirator models, 1860 and 1860S (small). 3M has published several warnings about counterfeit masks, which, upon first examination, appear real.

Fake, counterfeit duckbill style Aura Healthcare Particulate Respirators and 1870 surgical masks have also been reported in circulation by 3M.

- ▶ How to determine if your mask is fake
- ▶ What to do if you suspect a mask is fake
- ▶ What you should do if you're being forced to use a fake mask
- ▶ Assignment despite objection
- ▶ 3M warning letter
- ▶ Visual examples



**Fake masks, NOT manufactured  
by 3M, are being distributed  
in New Jersey health facilities.**

**If undetected, they could leave you  
and your patients:**



This document contains tips provided by HPAE and the face mask manufacturers to help you determine if your 3M respirator is a counterfeit. Always remember: **If you cannot get a good fit with your mask, DO NOT USE IT!**

Every HPAE worker and the community are encouraged go to: [www.hpaе.org/campaigns/exposed\\_at\\_risk](http://www.hpaе.org/campaigns/exposed_at_risk) to learn more, stay informed and take action.

# **HOW TO DETERMINE**

## **If your 3M respirator is a counterfeit:**

While 3M lists suspect lot numbers on their website warning letter, their list does not include ALL the lot numbers of the suspect counterfeits we have found in use at some of our facilities.

**The N95 you always used before does not fit you – It is too big or small.**

**Chemical smell, foul odor – such as gasoline, urine, formaldehyde, more.**

**Printing on the N95 that is crooked or off-center.**

**Printing that smears with an alcohol wipe.**

**Lot numbers on mask do not match lot numbers on box, or do not match lot numbers on other masks inside box.**

**Mask is small and thin; filter material (when mask is cut open) looks like paper towels.**

**Straps are stapled on irregularly.**

**Markings on box are missing information.**

**Box has a round Mylar seal on it with printing marked PERU.**

# **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO**

## **If you suspect a fake face mask?**

**Report issue to your manager or supervisor on duty and your Union Rep., and DO NOT USE THE MASK.**

**Request a different respirator.**

**Request a new fit test for any new type of respirator offered if you have not already been fit tested for particular respirator.**

**If you cannot get a good fit with any available, disposable N95s, your employer is required to provide you with a PAPR or CAPR: both are powered air-purifying respirators (sometimes referred to as a 'hood' or 'helmet'). Ask for a PAPR or CAPR.**

**Follow up incident report with an email to your manager. Why? It helps capture what steps you've taken to address the situation.**

**Take pictures of your faulty PPE.  
If possible, save the faulty PPE.**

**If you used a poor fitting respirator to treat COVID 19 patients, document your exposure in writing to your employer and the union. Keep copies of anything you submit or cc yourself in written communication.**

# WHAT SHOULD YOU DO

**If your supervisor forces you to use a fake mask, or if there is nothing else available to use?**

## **YOU HAVE THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:**

- ☒ Ask your manager: “Are you directing me to wear a mask that will not provide protection? What will happen if I choose not to do so?” Then:
- ☒ If you feel your health is at risk and no other option is available other than a counterfeit, ill-fitting mask, you may have to make the choice to either take the assignment or refuse to do so. If you choose to refuse assignment, call your union rep into discussion if available.
- ☒ Tell your supervisor you want to be reassigned to non-COVID patients. Or:
- ☒ Tell your supervisor you will take the assignment, even though you are objecting because you believe it will potentially put your health in jeopardy. Let your HPAE Rep know immediately.
- ☒ If you are an HPAE member, fill out an HPAE COVID-19 Assignment Despite Objection form: [hpaer.org/2020/04/covid-19-assignment-despite-objection/](https://hpaer.org/2020/04/covid-19-assignment-despite-objection/)

# If you decided to take the assignment, despite objections:

- **Protect Yourself:** Make sure you are also wearing a surgical mask over the counterfeit and a face shield on top of both.
- **Documentation:** Document your conversation with your supervisor, and include information about your assignment. Include information that is not HIPAA protected, such as time and place of conversation and assignment, your tasks, room number, witnesses, and any other pertinent information. Include detailed documentation of why you believe the respirator is fake or why you believe it will not protect you as you perform your duties.
- **Incident Report:** After your assignment, complete an Incident (or Occurrence) report and document, formally, that you believe you were exposed to COVID-19 and/or other related infectious disease hazards. Document your exposure occurred because you were not provided with appropriate respiratory protection. Document the person's name you reported the problem to. You have a legal right to a copy of this documentation! Capture through paper, screenshot, email or photo.
- Email Employer or Occupational Health to report workplace exposure.
- Follow up with your local leaders and representatives.
- Keep copies of all documentation.
- **Monitor Your Health:** If symptoms develop, apply for Workers Compensation through your employer, and work with your local leaders to verify your illness is included on the annual facility OSHA 300 log of workplace accidents and illnesses.
- **Use your voice:** Post your story on HPAE's COVID-19 Story Collector!  
<https://www.hpae.org/2020/03/covid-19-story-collector/>

# Full text from 3M's February 2021 warning letter to customers concerning counterfeit masks:

## **3M: COUNTERFEIT ALERT – NOT A PRODUCT RECALL**

February 11, 2021

*Dear Valued Customer,*

Recently, we have been receiving increasing reports of fraud related to the following three 3M surgical respirator models:

- 3M™ Health Care Particulate Respirator and Surgical Mask 1860;
- 3M™ Health Care Particulate Respirator and Surgical Mask 1860S; and
- 3M™ Aura™ Health Care Particulate Respirator and Surgical Mask 1870+.

These have included reports of fake/counterfeit product as well as fraudulent offers where product is offered but not delivered. We have been working with law enforcement to get counterfeit respirators off the market. These enforcement actions have resulted in the seizure of millions of counterfeit model 1860, 1860S, and 1870+ surgical respirators.

In evaluating offers for these respirators, please consider some common signs of counterfeit:

- All 3M model 1860, 1860S, and 1870+ respirators imported into the United States from any other country are likely to be counterfeit. 3M is not currently importing these respirator models into the United States. If you have been offered these models coming from outside the United States, they should be viewed as counterfeit.
- All 3M model 1860, 1860S, and 1870+ respirators exported from China/ Hong Kong should be viewed as counterfeit. We do not manufacture these respirators in China/Hong Kong.
- Do not rely on TUV, SGS, or similar certification reports. All shipments of 3M model 1860, 1860S, and 1870+ respirators accompanied by a TUV, SGS, or similar certification report are likely counterfeit.
- 3M does not use a “Peru Seal” or other similar seals (examples at right). Respirators bearing these seals are likely counterfeit.

With regard to model 1860, 1860S, and 1870+ surgical respirators, we have identified counterfeit product bearing the following Lot Codes:

**Model 1860**    B19029, B19063, B19206, B19240, B19130, B19133, B19155, B19161, B19206, B19314, B20010, B20013, B20016, B20018, B20020, B20021, B20022, B20025, B20060, B20119, B20235, B20245, B20281, B20670, R20025, R20102, R20144, R20150, R20183, R20190, R20294, R20328

**Model 1860S**    B20020, B20522, B20659, B20670, B20679, R20522

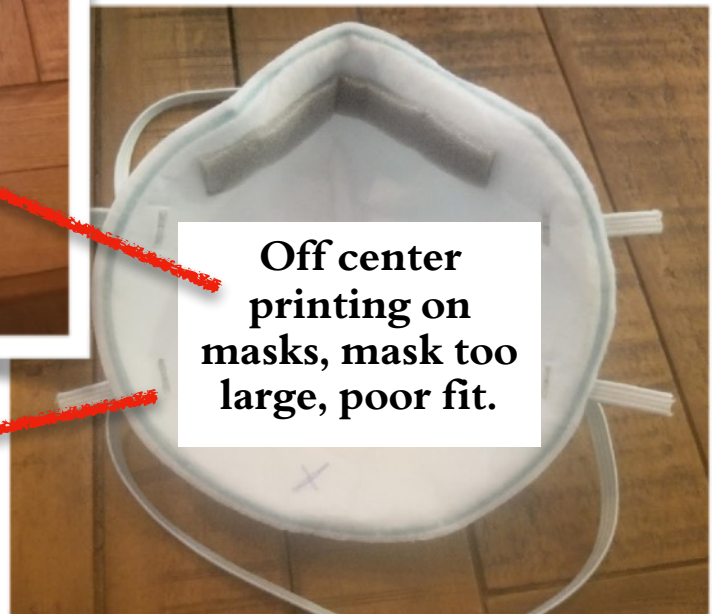
**Model 1870+**    C193041, C190241



# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:

This mask came out of the box with tape and gashes. Mask provided to members by employer, the week of 2/07/2021.

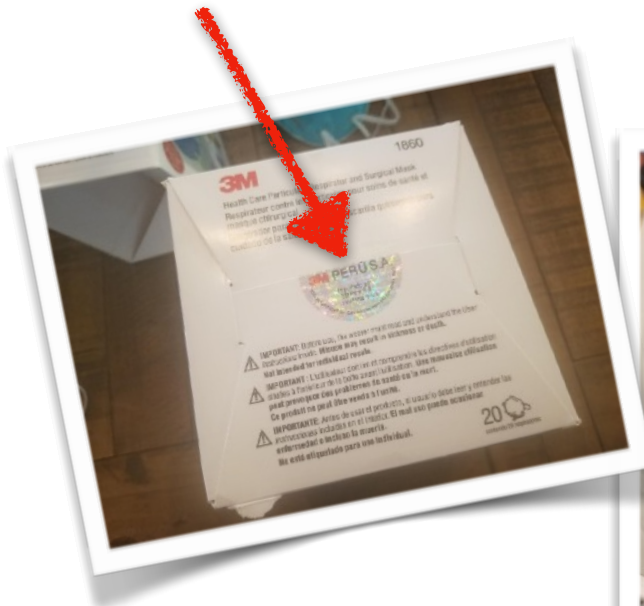
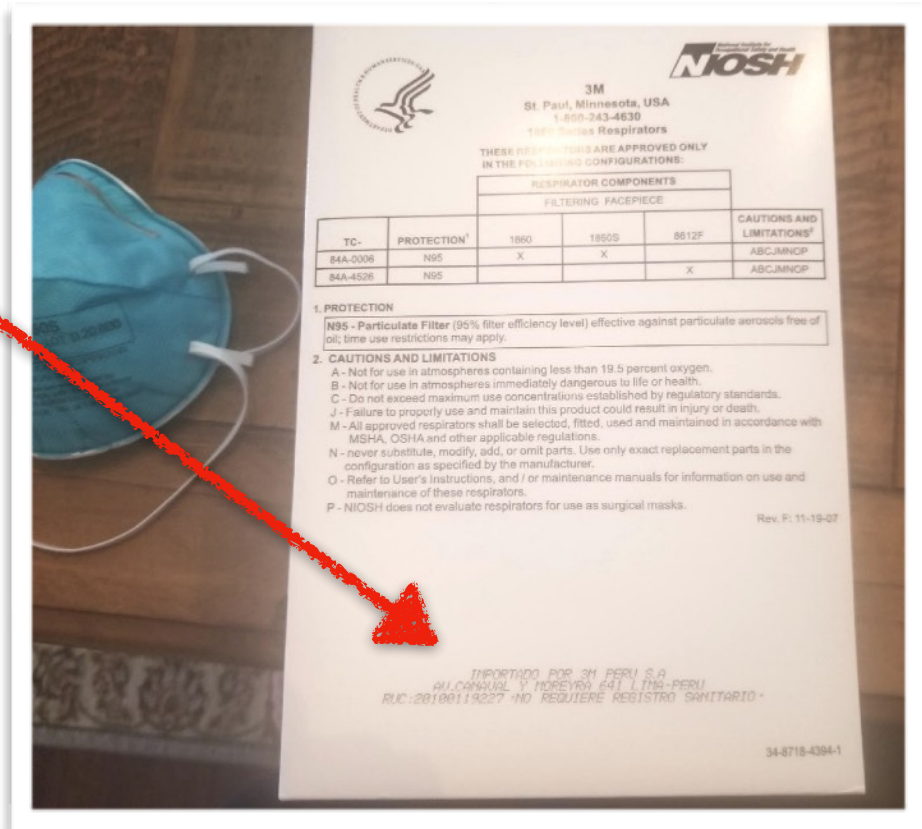


Off center  
printing on  
masks, mask too  
large, poor fit.

# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:

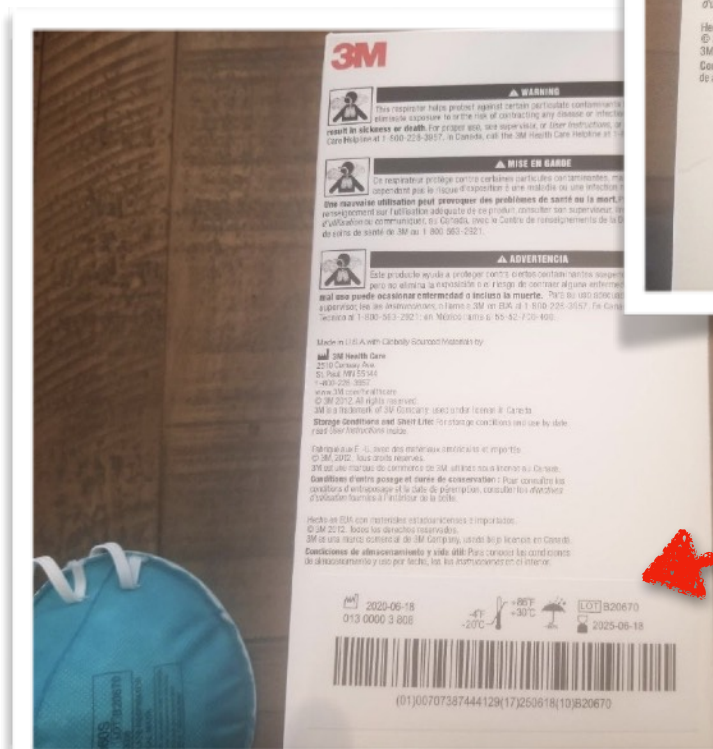
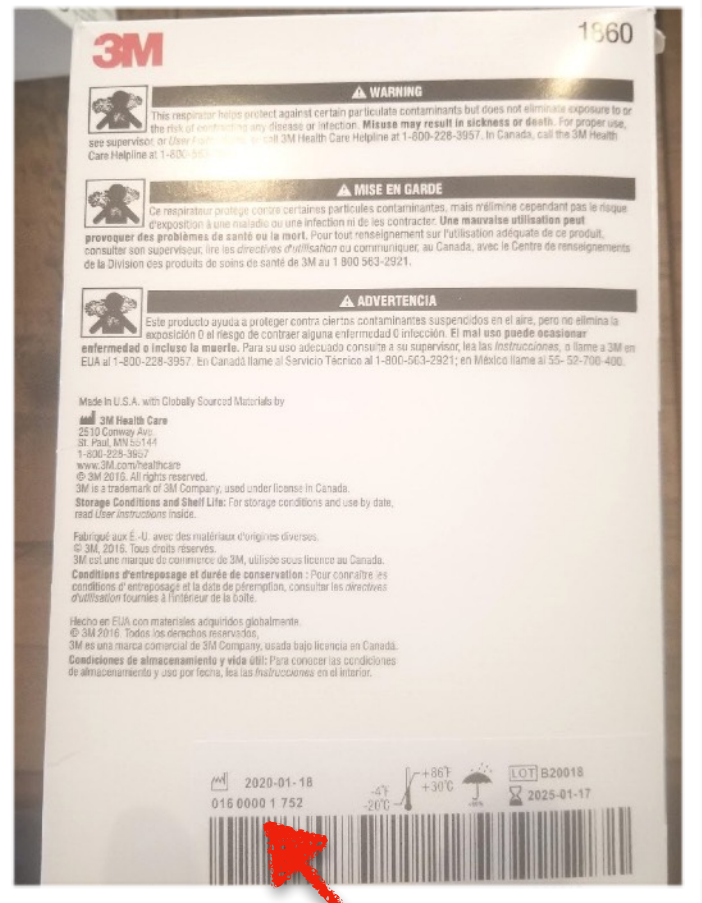
Note the references to Peru and the Mylar PERU seal on the boxes. 3M notes any box stamped PERU is counterfeit.





# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

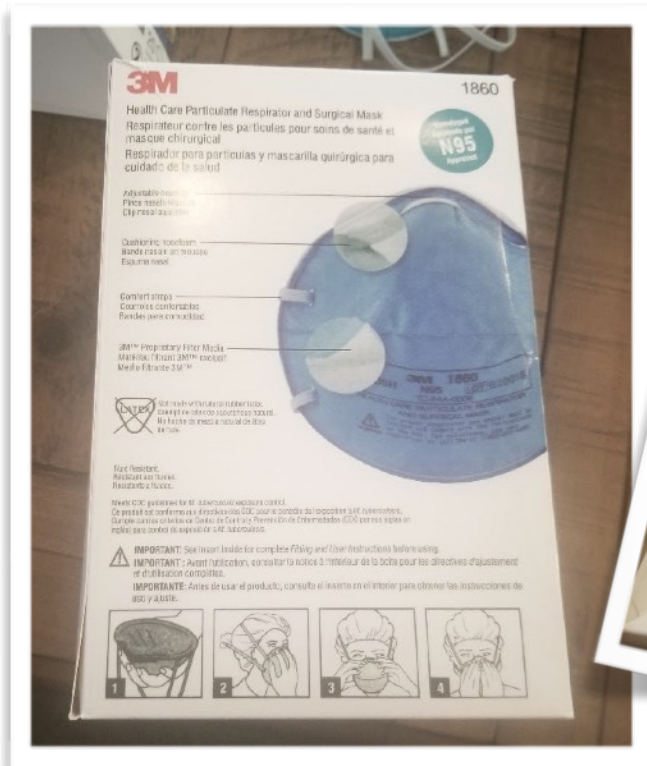
## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:



These lot numbers are listed by 3M as counterfeit.

# **FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

## **Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:**



**Non-standard box,  
bottom of box,  
no printing.**

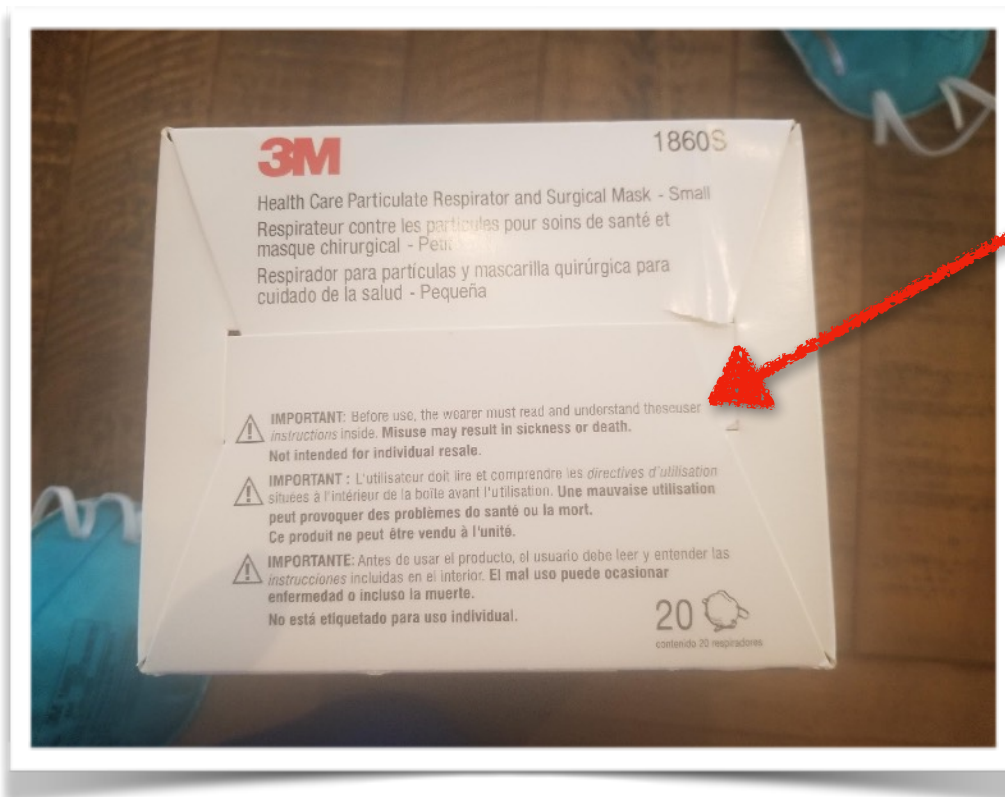
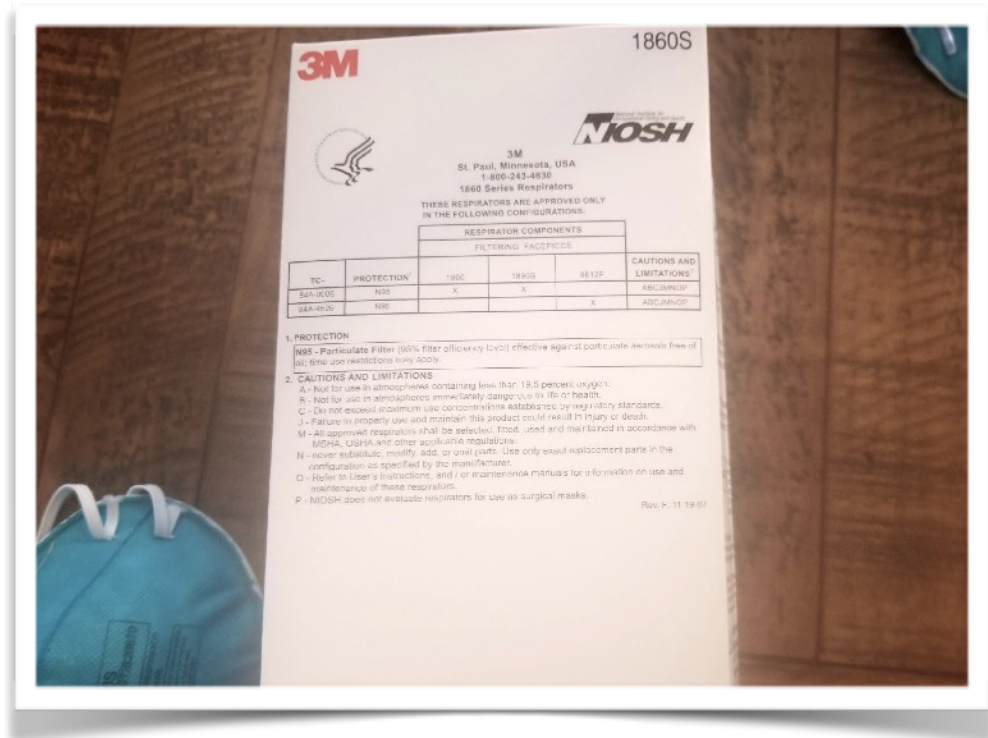


**Staple placement  
appears irregular.  
This mask also  
had off-center  
label printing.**

# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:

This box is missing any reference as to where mask was produced; no lot number or bar code.



Note typos  
in printing:  
"theseuser"



# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:

LOOK at this 3M's. Big time Fake N95's on a Covid Floor.

#Fake3Ms #Bootleg



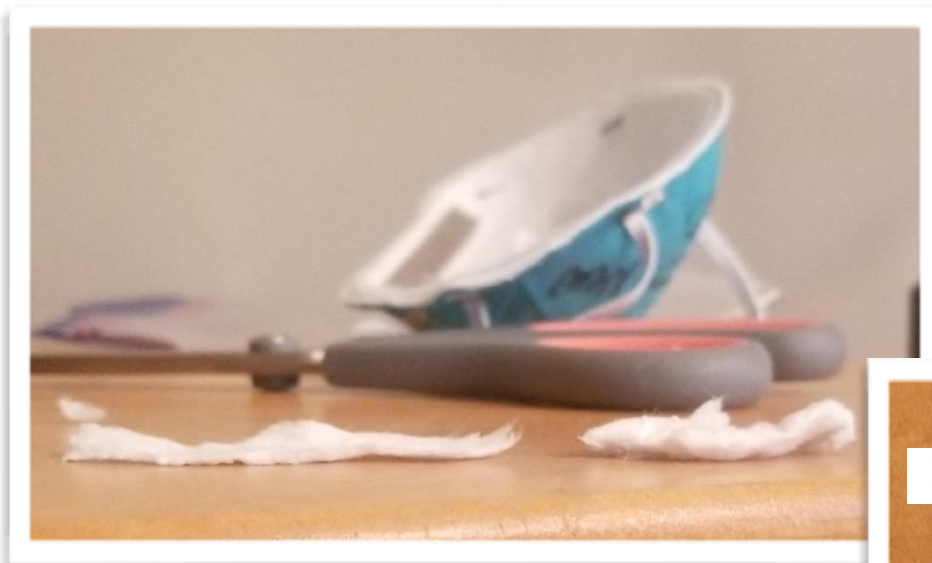
**Note no identifying information at all on the fake masks – there were also color and texture differences from mask to mask.**

# **FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

## **Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:**



**Note the difference of filter material in various masks provided. Both masks shown above are counterfeit, with lot numbers mentioned on the 3M website's letter.**



**These are filters from a fake 3M mask from November 2020, and a real 3M N95 respirator from April 2020.**

**Note the difference in texture and loft of the filter material.**

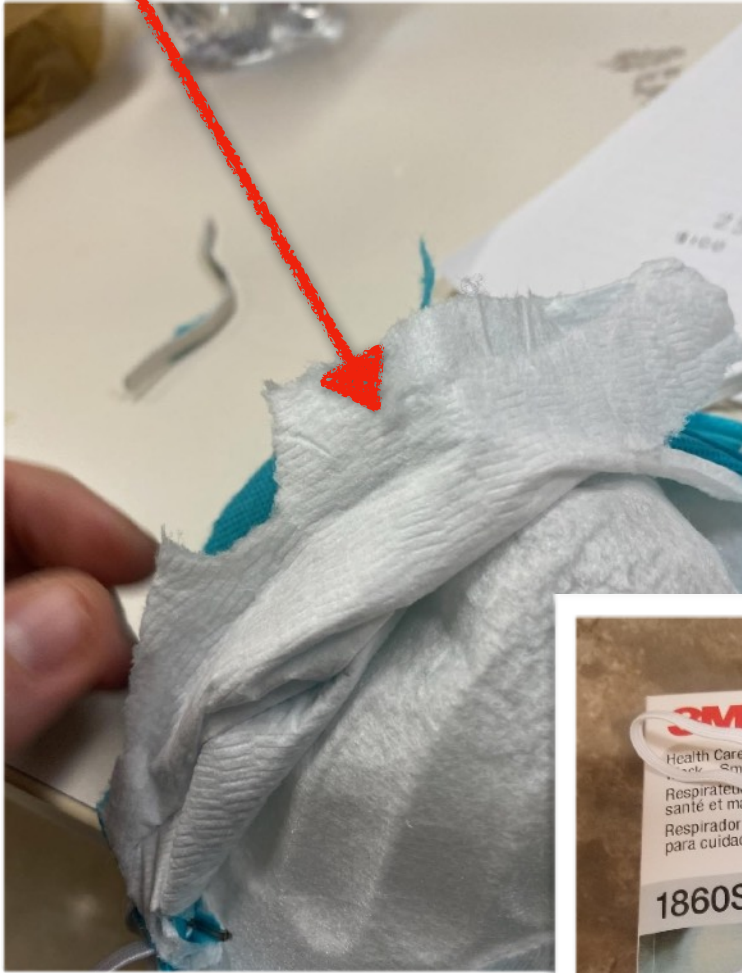




# **FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

## **Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:**

**Broke open mask. Inside feels like household paper towels.**



**Another example:  
Different sized masks in  
the same box and lot  
number, no printing on  
bottom of this box.**

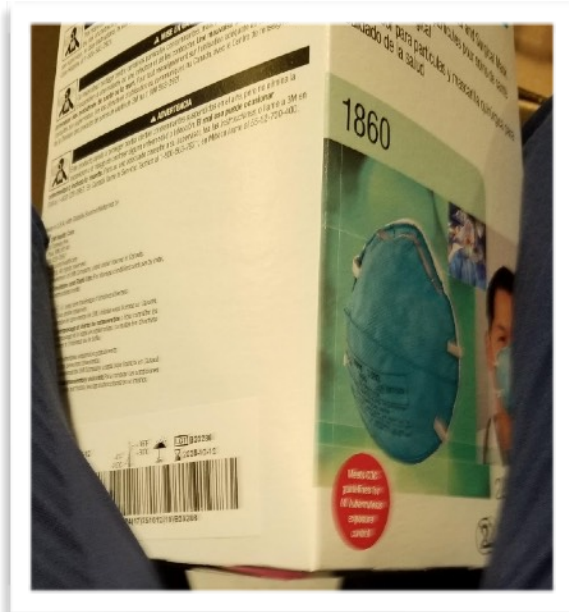




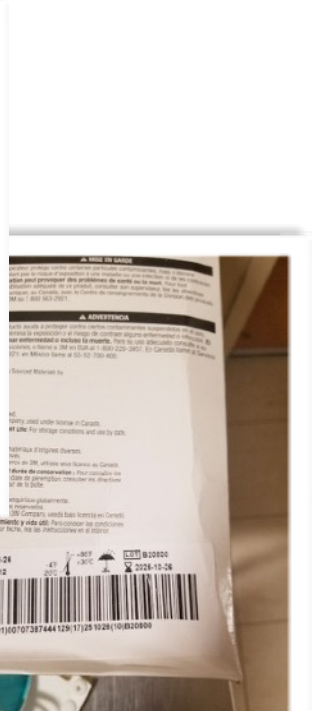
# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:

Masks with chemical odor, poor fit, no seal to face.



These boxes of masks had a foul, chemical odor.



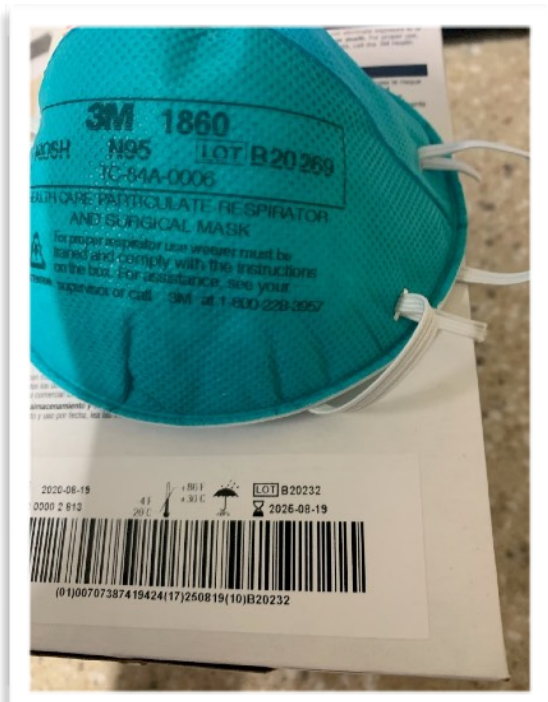
# FAKE 3M RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

## Visual Examples and Explanations of 3M Counterfeits:

These masks had poor fit, off-center label/printing; irregular colors and texture.



The lot numbers on masks do not match those printed on the box.





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information  
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[HPAE.org](https://HPAE.org)**