

Trend Airshield Pro

This re-designed helmet will protect you from the finest dust

New legislation banning the use of electrostatic charge filters is due to come into force in 2010, which has meant that some PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) won't meet the previous standards. This has called for a rethink on the old Trend dust mask, and while it's a pity Trend couldn't adapt a filter capable of fitting the old model, which would be very welcome to those that own them, the company's hands are tied.

The plus side is that it's provided the opportunity to go back to the drawing board. A couple of safety features are now built in – an alarm to let you know when the battery is getting low, which is important as the airflow rate drops off, and a nifty little tube with a captive ball that you place over the air port to see how much airflow there is. If you haven't tried a respirator-type mask such as this, the helmet design takes a little getting used to, as it weighs around a kilogram, which is considerable if you wear it all day, but it soon becomes part of you. It was the elasticated seals around the face and chin that took a lot more getting used to, for me. They have to be tight to do their job and protect you from ingress of dust, but I found them a little uncomfortable after a while. It does mean that if you have a beard you should get a decent seal though, something other respirators can struggle with!

Construction, protection

Without getting too technical, the mask has an EN12941 rating of THP2, (TH relating to TurboHood) and claims 98 percent efficiency in dealing with dust ingress. It is also suitable for use with MDF, which has to be a benefit!

All the gubbins that control the mask are held within the top of the hood and access is via two small lugs, allowing the top to pivot up.



The battery and replaceable twin filters are fitted towards the rear of the unit within this compartment, along with the airflow duct that blows the filtered air down over the face.

Holes in the chin area of the elasticated collar allow spent air to escape, the positive airflow keeping the dust from entering. The padded headband can be easily adjusted using the knob at the rear, and will fit from 54 to 61cm heads. No doubt the standard 97% is in amongst that somewhere!

The visor area is pretty robust, capable of light to medium impact blows should anything head its way, and as these respirators appeal to woodturners especially, should deflect timber coming off the lathe; a big lump is still likely to do some damage, but the helmet will definitely minimise injury.

The large area of the visor offers a good viewing area, and for those who like their Formula 1, there are overlays available to keep the visor pristine, removing the contaminated ones as necessary. As noise tends to go hand in hand with making dust nowadays, the hood also has locators for optional ear defenders, so

you can keep your eyes and ears in good nick, while your lungs remain free of dust.

Although the new batteries aren't compatible with the old model either, you now get eight hours out of them, which should be plenty (in theory) for most working practices. We won't mention the fact that it takes 14 hours to fully charge a completely flat battery, which may be frustrating if you use the Airshield constantly.

For me, the elasticated cuff may be uncomfortable after a while, but the benefits of breathing clean fresh air without the restrictions of facemask type filters massively outweighs this shortcoming.



▲ Pic.1 This little device measures airflow to indicate if the filters need changing



▲ Pic.2 Filters clip in to the top of the hood either side of the battery compartment

Good The Woodworking Verdict

- + Good seals, no restriction on breathing function
- The cuff around the face is tight; an expensive bit of kit

Rating ★★★★★

Airflow: 210litres per minute (minimum 150 LPM)

Decibels: 70

Weight: 1kg

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