

Many soldiers have already found out how difficult the sand and heat of the deserts of Southwest Asia make it for most Army equipment to do their jobs. The desert is no picnic for your M40- or M42-series mask either. Sand can plug airways and heat and the desert sun can shorten the life of some mask parts. This advice, though, can provide your mask an oasis in the desert:

Keep it clean. The fine sand of Southwest Asia will penetrate every part of your mask, which could lead to poor breathing or seeing. The only ways to fight sand are to keep your mask in its carrier as much as possible and to clean the mask often.

Areas you want to pay special attention to when cleaning are around the outlet valve disc, the inside of lenses, the canister's air intake, and in the mask's inner lining. You can shake out much of the sand and use a dry, clean cloth to wipe out the rest.



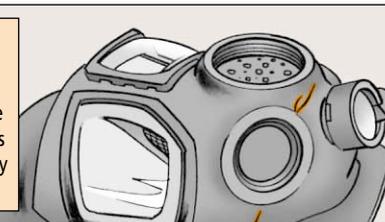
Of course, if your mask is really caked with sand the best option is to wash it. Remove the hood, outserts, outlet valve cover, second skin, outlet valve disk and canister. Dip a clean cheesecloth in clean water and wring it almost dry. Then use the cloth to clean out all dirt inside and outside the facepiece. Wipe the mask dry with a dry cloth. Make sure the mask is completely dry before you put it back in the carrier.



If the mask is really filthy, mix liquid soap, NSN 8520-00-228-0598, in the water. After cleaning with the soap-water mixture, wipe out the mask with a clean cloth that's been dipped in water. Then wipe out the moisture with a dry cloth.

Second skin and facepiece. Check both the skin and facepiece for cracking or sticky or soft areas. Pay special attention to the parts of the skin where it is stretched, such as around the canister, the voicemitter, and eyelenses.

Check second skin and facepiece for cracks and sticky spots



Outserts. Use them. They protect the eyelenses from blowing sand that will scratch up the lenses and make it difficult for you to see. Scratched outserts can be replaced quickly. Scratched eyelenses mean you need a new facepiece.

Use outserts. They protect eyelenses



Water only. If you drink anything other than water through the drink tube coupling, the coupling will gunk up. That doesn't make for a pleasant drinking experience. And keep the drink tube coupling stored in the outlet valve cover at all times to help it stay clean.

