

Guide for selection according to the type of mask

This table is a guide in selecting the type of mask to use depending on your work category within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It indicates the priority of choice and type to be avoided either due to unsuitability for exposure or to leave the equipment available to sectors where it is more recommended. Each specific sector must also refer to the specific recommendations for their own sector.

For workers who are usually exposed to an occupational risk requiring a specific mask to be worn (personal protective equipment), this usual protection remains necessary if it is a level above the level recommended in this table. E.g. If a worker has to wear an FFP3 mask to protect their health from the inhalation of dangerous particles during the manufacturing process at their work station, they must wear an FFP3 and not a textile mask.

With respect to healthcare professionals, our recommendations remain within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific situations that require specific rules established by the hospital hygiene advisor are excluded from this table. The healthcare establishment's own rules must be applied.

Type	Healthcare sector - High risk of contagion	Healthcare sector - Medium risk of contagion	Healthcare sector - Low risk of contagion	general public	contact roles	Professional in contact with the public	companies * (between colleagues in the workplace)
FFP3	A***	V	O	X	X	X	V
FFP2	A***	V	O	X	B	X	V
FFP1	O**	C**	B	B	C	A	A/V**
Surgical mask 1	O**	C**	C**	C	C	C	C
Surgical mask 2	O**	B**	A	O	A	B	O
Surgical mask 2R	C	A	A	X	A	A	X
Industrial textile mask	X	C	B	A	B	A	A
Home-made textile mask	X	C	C	A	B	B	B
Paper protection mask	X	X	X	B	X	C	C
Buff	X	X	X	B	X	C	C

* N.B. if an occupational risk in a company requires a personal protective mask to be worn, it MUST be worn in compliance with the instructions determined by the company for the completion of normal work. One must never wear protection below the level recommended by the risk analysis.

** N.B. choosing this type of protection could create a risk of 'confusion' with a model recommended with a higher level of protection because only a marking differentiates between them although they seem similar at first glance.

*** For these categories it is mandatory to additionally wear a face shield if there is a risk of drip contact (eg when intubating).

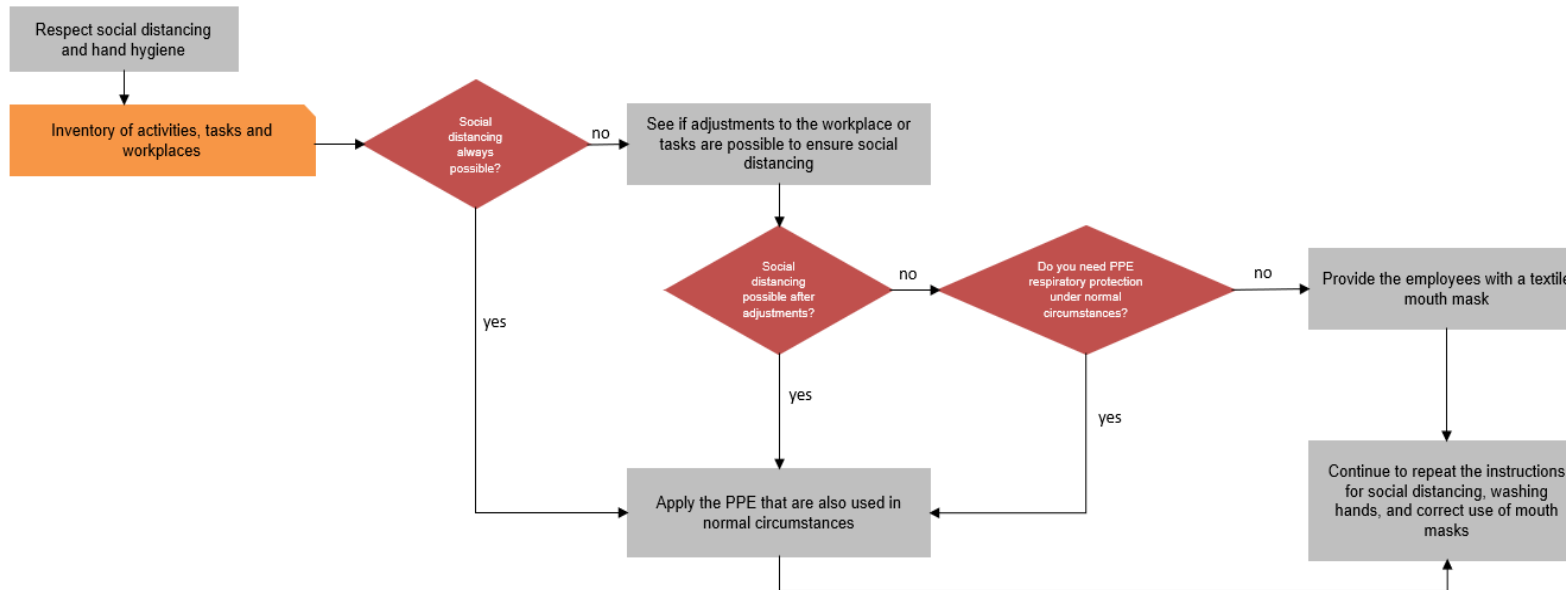
Key:	Priority:
A	High priority
B	Medium priority
C	Low priority
V	Variable according to the risks present
O	To be avoided (not recommended or to be kept for others)
X	Not recommended

References:

"consensus on the use of masks"

"national guidance mask reprocessing"

Convenient decision tree: choice of mouth masks for organisations outside the healthcare sector



Definitions

Healthcare sector - High risk of contagion	Staff facing a low risk of aerosolization and not having to provide proximity care or for a short period (<15 min) (e.g. (ex: intubation, resuscitation, aspiration, expectoration, dentists,...)
Healthcare sector - Medium risk of contagion	Staff facing a low risk of aerosolization but having to provide local care for a longer period (more than 15 min). (Ex: physiotherapists,...)
Healthcare sector - Low risk of contagion	Staff facing a low risk of aerosolization and not having to provide close care or for a short period (<15 min).
general public	People who have to travel outside where wearing a mask would be recommended/compulsory (shops, transport, etc.)
Contact roles	People in the world of employment who are in close contact with the public to perform their work (e.g. hairdressers, beauty salons, etc.)
Professional in contact with the public	People in work who are in contact with the public from whom they need to be protected and where social distancing is either not possible or difficult. E.g. food shop, clothes shop, DIY shops, etc.
companies *	People in the work where social distancing is not possible between colleagues (e.g. maintenance workers, policemen, construction workers, etc.)

FFP3	Mask that meets FFP3 criteria
FFP2	Mask that meets FFP2 criteria
FFP1	Mask that meets FFP1 criteria
Surgical mask 1	Mask that meets Surgical mask 1 criteria
Surgical mask 2	Mask that meets Surgical mask 2 criteria
Surgical mask 2R	Mask that meets Surgical mask 2R criteria
Industrial textile mask	Textile masks made in a controlled manner, following the manufacturing and testing protocol recommended by the SPF and sold by companies and local authorities, etc.
Home-made textile mask	Textile masks made individually by anyone at home, without inspection or control of the materials used.
Paper mask	Comfort mask that does not meet the mask criteria above.
Buff	Scarf, bandanna, buff... textile cloth not intended as a mask but repurposed in the context of the pandemic.




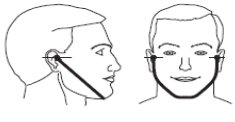
Points for attention in selecting masks:

Comfort:

In terms of comfort, you must be attentive to the following criteria:

Material: Choose supple, soft, non-irritant and non-allergenic materials. The material must meet the mask's needs.

Face shape: Not everyone has the same face shape and not all countries produce them according to the same ethological standards. You must therefore ensure that the overall shape of the mask fits your workers.
Here is an example of standard face dimensions in Europe.

			
Distance bigoniale 132,5 – 144,5 mm	Longueur menton- sellion 123 – 135 mm	Distance interpupillaire 65 – 71 mm	Arc bitragus-gnathion 295 – 315 mm

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Size: In general there are several mask sizes. You must choose the size according to the people who have to wear them. You must avoid masks that are too tight and cause discomfort, or masks that are too wide and not effective.

Rigidity: A mask that is too rigid may not fit the worker's face properly.

Heat: Depending on the materials used, wearing a mask can create a lot of heat around the face. This makes it more difficult to wear the mask for a long period. Choosing a mask that creates little heat will make it easier to wear for the entire period recommended. This factor is even more important if a physical effort is required during the work.

Filtration capacity: This is the main selection criterion. The mask must offer a sufficient level of protection for the risk to which workers are exposed.

It is essential to choose a filter that will protect the wearer effectively from the risk present.

This filtration capacity is defined by standards.

Breathability: The more airtight or filtering a mask is, the less breathable it is. A compromise between these 2 criteria is necessary. A mask with low breathability is very restrictive for the wearer and this will limit it being worn over long periods. For masks with the same filtration capacity, you must choose a mask with the greatest breathability.

Possibility of communicating: All mask wearers must at some point communicate with other people. If the mask is a major obstacle to this communication, once again, it will not be worn during the recommended period. The more filtering, tight and airtight a mask is, the less easy communication will be. Once again, a compromise must be found between effectiveness and communication (with priority for actual protection).

Wearing a mask correctly:

Rules: The mask must cover the nose, mouth and chin. Permanently.

It must be worn as close as possible to the face to guarantee proper airtightness, optimal protection, etc.

For masks that must guarantee airtightness (FFP1-2-3), having a beard (even for a few days) is not allowed. A beard will prevent the mask from adhering properly to the skin and will cause 'leaks' from the mask and therefore lower protection.

It must be placed with clean hands, without touching the front of the mask and only holding it by the elastics (or fastening system).

Illustrations: Link to educational videos:
<https://www.mensura.be/fr/corona-documents-utiles/videos>
<https://www.mensura.be/nl/corona-nuttige-documenten/videos>

Link to an information poster:

How to remove it

Rules: To remove the mask, you must avoid touching the front of it with your hands. You hold the mask by the elastics or ties and remove it delicately.
Once you have removed the mask, do not touch it again or reuse it. If applicable, throw it away following the method defined.
After removal, wash your hands with soap and/or disinfectant gel.

Point for attention:

For reusable masks, be careful to manage their temporary storage while they are waiting to be washed properly to avoid any secondary contamination.

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How should masks be stored?

Masks must be stored in a clean place without contamination. The packages must be closed.

General storage The stock must allow for regular use with no risk of shortages, taking into account the supplier delivery times. A minimum stock must be defined.
FFP and surgical masks are in principle single-use masks and must be disposed of after use.
However, if the mask is to be kept between 2 uses, it must be stored in a clean, closed box. You must avoid touching the outside of the mask.

Keep your mask
between 2 uses.

It is recommended that the mask be stored outer side down in the box to limit contact when worn again.

The box must also be stored outside the contaminated atmosphere.

The box must be washed regularly to avoid contaminating the next masks.

It is still compulsory to wash your hands with water and soap before and after handling the mask.

Appoint a person who can manage the stock.

Provide boxes that close hermetically and can be washed with soapy water.

Tips|tricks

Label the intermediate storage boxes by name to avoid confusion between workers.

Have several suppliers for the same type of mask to avoid the risks of them being out of stock. Having several models of the same type of mask limits this risk further.