



Facial Protection for Laundry Operatives

The Government has laid out detailed guidance this week on [Working safely during COVID-19 in factories, plants and warehouses](#). Among many other important aspects, the guidance also addresses Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and face coverings in its section 6. Whilst there is a heavy weightage on a comprehensive risk assessment, the guidance is careful to define the difference between facial coverings and face masks/respirators.

As per your risk assessment, if you choose to provide face masks to your staff, we have put together a list of suppliers who have informed the TSA that they have supply of masks available. Please note, this is not an exhaustive list; there may be other suppliers who would be able to supply you with different specifications of masks.

According to WHO, decisions makers should consider the following:

1. Purpose of mask use
2. Risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus in the local context:
3. Vulnerability of the person/population
4. Population setting
5. Feasibility: availability and costs of the mask, and tolerability by individuals
6. Type of mask: medical mask versus nonmedical mask

Following are the main types of masks/coverings for your consideration:

- Face coverings - Circumstances where this is marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect the wearer, but it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.
- Surgical masks – These must be tested and confirm compliance with EN 14683:2019
- Respirators - If the intended use of the mask is to protect the wearer against infective agents (bacteria, viruses or fungi). N95(US)/FFP2(UK and EU) must be tested and confirm compliance with EN 149:2001+A1:2009

The prefix KN95 is sometimes used. According to University of Chicago sources, both N95 and KN95 masks are rated to capture 95% of tiny particles (0.3 micron particles). The main difference between N95 and KN95 are summarised as below:

1. N95 masks have slightly stricter requirements for pressure drop while inhaling and exhaling. That means they are required to be slightly more breathable than KN95 masks.
2. To be certified as a KN95 mask, the Chinese government requires the manufacturer to run mask fit tests on real humans with $\leq 8\%$ leakage.

Due to the fact that used masks are considered highly contaminated, it is essential that:

- the body of the mask is not touched by the fingers/hands of the wearer
- hands are disinfected (full hand disinfection) after mask removal
- a mask is worn covering the nose and mouth of the wearer, at no time a mask is hanging around the neck of the wearer



- a used mask should be disposed of when no longer needed or between two procedures; when there is a further need for protection a new mask should be put on.

The Government guidance states *'unless you are in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very high, your risk assessment should reflect the fact that the role of PPE in providing additional protection is extremely limited. However, if your risk assessment does show that PPE is required, then you must provide this PPE free of charge to workers who need it. Any PPE provided must fit properly.'*

There are several guidelines available from Public Health England, HSE and WHO on use of masks. Please refer to some of the useful resources below.

Government Advice:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5eb965d5d3bf7f5d3c74a2dd/working-safely-during-covid-19-factories-plants-warehouses-110520.pdf>

RPE at work Guidance from HSE:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg53.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/respiratory-protective-equipment/fit-testing-basics.htm>

Advice on the use of masks from WHO:

[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak)

Comparison N95 - KN95

<https://smartairfilters.com/en/blog/whats-the-difference-between-n95-and-kn95-masks/>



Supply Route for Face Masks

Please see the table below of the suppliers we have been approached by so far to let us know they are selling face masks. Please contact them to find the best quantity and price for your company. Additionally, please note that we have not carried out a verification, certification or standards check of these masks.

Company	Contact Details	Email	Type of Masks	Minimum Order
Dibella	Frank Neumann	NEUMANN@dibella.de	Re-Usable Masks KN95 Mask	400 500
Elsatex Ltd	Shelley Saunders	shelley@elsatex.com	KN95 Mask Disposable Mask	1000 2500
Linen Connect		masks@linenconnect.com	Disposable Masks KN95 Masks	500,000 100,000
MEDUCOMP GmbH	Sascha Cyganek	s.cyganek@meducomp.de	FFP2 Masks	100
SaferMask Group	Andrew Pearson	andrew@safermask.group	Re-Usable Mask	100
Scott Direct and Seahawk	Rob Sayles	salesenquiries@scott-direct.com	P2 Mask 3Ply Disposable Mask Re-Usable Mask	500 2000 200