**Face Coverings**

**All face masks/coverings are regulated in the UK.**

Face masks/coverings can be divided into the three different product categories as follows:

1. Face masks that are designed to protect the wearer and/or intended for use in the workplace are classed as **Personal Protective Equipment**.
2. Face masks intended to protect others (the patient) from the wearer in a healthcare setting are known as **Surgical/ Medical masks**.
3. A **face covering** is a non-medical and non-personal protective equipment grade face mask. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, but it may protect others if you are infected and have not developed symptoms

It is important, people do not get a false sense of security about the level of protection provided by wearing a face covering. It is essential that everyone continues to:

* practice social distancing
* wash their hands thoroughly throughout the day
* ‘catch it, kill it, bin it’ when they sneeze or cough

That’s still the best way to protect yourself and others from COVID-19

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

PPE is equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work.

* **Requirements**

The essential health and safety requirements (listed in Annex II of EU Regulation 2016/425) apply to all PPE within the scope of the Regulation.

PPE must undergo a conformity assessment procedure, by an EU Notified Body, in accordance with its risk categorisation to demonstrate compliance with the essential requirements.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) cannot be sold or supplied as PPE unless it is CE marked. The **only** exception is for PPE that is organised by the UK Government for use by NHS or other healthcare workers where assessments have been undertaken by HSE as the Market Surveillance Authority.

Further information is available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/index.htm>

* **KN95 Masks**

KN95 is a performance rating under the Chinese standard GB2626:2006. However, there is no independent certification or assurance of their quality and products manufactured to KN95 rating are declared as compliant by the manufacturer

A substantial number of face masks, claiming to be of KN95 standards, provide an inadequate level of protection and are likely to be poor quality products accompanied by fake or fraudulent paperwork. Further information is available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/safetybulletins/use-of-face-masks-designated-kn95.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=kn95-safety-alert&utm_content=home-page-news>

KN95 masks should not be categorised as face coverings.

* **Other Sources of PPE information**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886169/Guidance-for-businesses-ppe-regulations-version-3.pdf>

High-Volume Manufacturers of COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/886170/Guidance-for-businesses-high-volume-manufacture-of-ppe-version-4.pdf>

Small-Scale Manufacturers of COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/883462/Guidance-for-businesses-and-individuals-small-scale-manufacture-of-ppe-version-1.pdf>

**Medical masks**

Medical/ Surgical masks are intended for health care staff to wear to protect patients during surgical procedures and other medical settings.

Surgical mask intended to protect the patient, must meet the design and safety requirements of the Medical Device Regulations (MDD/MDR) and be CE marked. Further information available <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-on-class-1-medical-devices>

Exemptions from MDD/MDR during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is available <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/exemptions-from-devices-regulations-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

**Additional information**

Regulatory status of equipment being used to help prevent coronavirus (COVID-19) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulatory-status-of-equipment-being-used-to-help-prevent-coronavirus-covid-19>

Regulatory guidance for medical devices <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/regulatory-guidance-for-medical-devices>

**Face Coverings**

A face covering is a non-medical and non-personal protective equipment grade face mask and is not intended to protect the wearer against viral infection. However, when used in conjunction with relevant public health advice, may reduce the risk of general transmission of a viral infection. These are regulated by the General Product Safety Regulations.

Guidance for manufacturers and makers of face coverings to comply with relevant legislation <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/891041/Guidance-for-businesses-and-individuals-face-coverings-version-2.pdf>

World Health Organisation (WHO) has produced advice for the public: When and how to use face coverings <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

Further information available eh@fermanaghomagh.com.

**Additional information**

Department of Health statement on wearing face coverings <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/statement-use-face-coverings>

Government’s Coronavirus (COVID-19): overview and advice <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-overview-and-advice>

Public Health Agency COVID-19: Information for the public <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus/covid-19-information-public>

HSE -Face coverings and face masks during the coronavirus outbreak <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/ppe-face-masks/face-coverings-and-face-masks.htm>