

FACE MASKS COMPARISON AND USAGE GUIDELINES

Unite
against
COVID-19

KN95 FACE MASKS

A **KN95 respirator** is a respiratory protective device designed to achieve a very close facial fit and very efficient filtration of airborne particles. Note that the edges of the respirator are designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth. However, they need to be fitted properly.

The 'KN95' designation means that when subjected to careful testing, the respirator blocks at least 95% of very small (0.3 micron) test particles. If properly fitted, the filtration capabilities of KN95 respirators exceed those of face masks. **KN95 masks are not to be shared.**

CDC GUIDELINES ON USE

Extended use is favoured over reuse because it is expected to involve less touching of the respirator and therefore less risk of contact transmission. A key consideration for safe extended use is that the respirator must maintain its fit and function. Excessive facial hair needs to be limited as this can restrict the mask forming a seal. Workers in other industries routinely use KN95 respirators for several hours uninterrupted. Experience in these settings indicates that respirators can function within their design specifications for **8 hours of continuous or intermittent use**. Considerations are environmental factors, excessive dust etc. Dispose of the mask when it gets wet or dirty or contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids.



Prior to donning your mask perform an inspection of the mask looking for holes or tears in the mask. If the mask is damaged it needs to be discarded and not used.

- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp
- To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

Supplies of KN95 respirators can become depleted during a pandemic or wide-spread outbreaks of other infectious respiratory illnesses. Existing CDC guidelines recommend a combination of approaches to conserve supplies in such circumstances. These existing guidelines recommend:

- Minimize the number of individuals who need to use respiratory protection through the preferential use of engineering and administrative controls e.g. Essential staff onsite, social distancing
- Implement practices allowing extended use and/or limited reuse of N95 respirators, when acceptable; and
- Prioritize the use of N95 respirators for those personnel at the highest risk of contracting or experiencing complications of infection. E.g. S & T Truck Drivers, off site contractual work.



SURGICAL MASKS (FACE MASKS)

A surgical mask is a loose-fitting, disposable device that creates a physical barrier between the mouth and nose of the wearer and potential contaminants in the immediate environment. **Surgical masks are not to be shared. Note that the edges of the mask are not designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth.**

If worn properly, a surgical mask is meant to help block large-particle droplets, splashes, sprays, or splatter that may contain germs (viruses and bacteria), keeping it from reaching your mouth and nose. Surgical masks may also help reduce exposure of your saliva and respiratory secretions to others.

Surgical masks are not intended to be used more than once.

If they become wet they should be replaced. Never wear a mask for longer than **8 hours**. If your mask is damaged or soiled, or if breathing through the mask becomes difficult, you should remove the face mask, discard it safely, and replace it with a new one.

Prior to donning your mask perform an inspection of the mask looking for holes or tears in the mask. If the mask is damaged it needs to be discarded and not used.

- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks.
- To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

