

The Use of Face Coverings in Construction during Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Construction employers have asked the CLC for guidance on the use of face coverings in response to coronavirus to help provide a consistent approach across the industry.

Definitions

[Face coverings](#) are made from fabric or cloth and cover the mouth and nose to protect others, not the user, from infection. They are **not** PPE as they do not protect people from work-related hazards and are not made to a recognised standard.

[Surgical face masks](#) are designed and manufactured to be used in medical settings to limit the spread of infection and they are resistant to droplets of fluids and splashes. Whilst they are made to a recognised standard, they are not considered to be PPE.

Visors are classed as PPE and are usually worn to protect the face and eyes. They protect users, not others, against droplets carrying infection.

[Respirators](#) which are used extensively in construction activities, are classed as PPE and protect people from work-related hazards that cannot be eliminated or reduced in any other way. They should be specific to the hazard identified and provided free of charge by employers.

Current Position

The use of **face coverings** in response to coronavirus is mandatory for members of the public in an increasing number of specified places, most of which meet all of the following criteria:

- enclosed public spaces
- where social distancing isn't always possible
- where people come into contact with others they do not normally meet

The use of **face coverings** or **PPE** is not required in response to coronavirus in offices or whilst carrying out construction activities and the Government guidance on [Working safely during coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Construction and other outdoor work](#) states that: *Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.*

CLC Position

Where construction workers are not required to wear PPE for their specific task and their workplace meets all of the criteria below, their employer should make available, as a minimum, face coverings:

- an enclosed space
- where social distancing isn't always possible
- where they come into contact with others they do not normally meet

Current Social Distancing Requirements

Workers should maintain a distance of two metres, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable.