

A Guide to Disposable Face Masks



In this guide we will explain how the following disposable masks can be found in the market and fall into two groups, Medical / Surgical and Safety. They both have very different protection levels which you will learn more about as you continue reading.

Medical / Surgical

Resistance to the expulsion of fluids, droplets and particles.

There are three levels:

Type I. - Do not have resistance to fluids and are not suitable for use.

Type II. - Do not have resistance to fluids and are not suitable for use.

Type IIR. - Do have resistance to fluids and droplets (as tested to EN14683:2019) and will have a Declaration of Conformity to the Medical Devices Directive (MDD) 93/42/EEC and a supporting test report.

In use, the purpose and function of the Type IIR mask is to help prevent large particles expelled by the wearer (spittle and mucous) from reaching the patient or work environment.

As PPE specialists, we will only supply as a minimum standard of face covering a Type IIR Disposable Face Mask.

NOTE: This type of mask is designed to limit the expulsion of fluids, droplets and particles. It does not offer any respiratory protection to the wearer for incoming fluids, droplets or particles. Once the mask becomes wet it is recommended to be replaced immediately and be disposed of in a hygienic way.

Safety

If fitted correctly these offer protection of the respiratory system of the wearer (in the UK a face fit test is required to be carried out).

There are three levels:

FFP1 - Not recommended for use against the Coronavirus.

FFP2 - Have a minimum 94% filtration and mainly used in: construction, agriculture, healthcare against influenza viruses. They are currently used for protection against the Coronavirus.

FFP3 - Have a minimum 99% filtration and protect against very fine particles such as asbestos. P1, P2 and P3 masks all fall under the PPE safety regulations and will be tested and marked as such (EN149: 2001) on the product itself.

In use the purpose and function of FFP respirator masks is to prevent the wearer from inhaling aerosols (dust, smoke, mists), vapours and gases as well as fine dust particles.

For full respiratory protection, we would always recommend an FFP2 or FFP3 masks which have 94% and 99% filtration as a minimum and will protect against the Coronavirus.

In all usages the mask must be fitted in a correct and secure way to ensure a minimum level of protection.