

## Covid 19 – PPE Awareness

All I appreciate that many rumours and discussions are occurring re PPE for staff especially around Face Masks & Gloves.

Danhouse have followed the Scientific guidance issued by the Government, and Public Health England at all times. This is we believe the correct and only way to keep all our Staff, Clients and of course your families as safe as possible.

Below are extracts of the information you can find on the PHE Government website which is quite clear around PPE to be issued to Non-Medical/Care worker staff.

***For most job roles, a face mask is not needed, and wearing one could increase the risk of exposure to the virus due to the wearer touching their face more often than usual.***

The surgical masks that are often pictured in the media have very little value as a protective measure.

They primarily reduce the amount to which any virus is expelled by a person, rather than preventing exposure from another person.

The most effective widely available face mask is the FFP3 (filtering facepiece respirator level 3), which is the same standard used where the presence of asbestos is suspected.

This will not eliminate exposure to the virus but reduces the exposure level by up to six times compared to a surgical mask.

There have been many advertisements, particularly on social media, for N95 masks. This is an American standard that is only equivalent to UK FFP2.

The N95 mask is only tested against dry contaminants, whilst FFP3 is tested against wet aerosols. As such the N95 mask is less effective, and FFP3 should be supplied where face masks are required.

The N95 mask is however preferable to surgical masks or no mask at all. This is acceptable if the FFP3 is not available to be provided.

Any mask supplied must have a CE certification mark, which indicates conformity with EU health, safety and environmental protection standards. This should be found either on the mask itself, on the packaging.

All masks must be personal issue only – they must not be shared between workers.

To be effective the mask must fit properly, with a tight seal around the nose and mouth. Most suppliers sell fit-testing kits.

Fitting is critical as gaps around the bridge of the nose and under the chin allow air to leak in, defeating the filtration.

Guidance on face fitting is [available from the HSE](#). The [British Safety Industry Federation \(BSIF\)](#) can provide detailed guidance where large-scale fitting is required.

### **Non-health and social care settings**

For other workers and sectors, based on current evidence, there is very little scientific evidence of widespread benefit from PPE. Instead, practicing good hand hygiene and social distancing is key to minimizing the risk of infection. We emphasize and reassure employers that for the majority the most effective way they can ensure that their employees are safe at work is to:

- where possible, alter business-as-usual ways of working to ensure social distancing can take place. In some circumstances this could involve the erection of physical 'splash barriers' to decrease staff anxiety, or redesign of customer flows to minimize contact opportunities
- ensure staff are aware and signs are visible in the workplace reminding employees and customers not to enter the premises if they have COVID-19 symptoms such as a high temperature or persistent cough (or a member of their household displays symptoms) and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
- that employees are provided with regular breaks to allow them to wash their hands for 20 seconds. Break areas and break times should also be set up to allow for social distancing to occur to minimize contact during these times

Here is the link for you to check on updates to the latest information.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

We of course want to make sure you are all safe in the environments you work in and where possible we are prioritising the exposure you may have to this virus. We are also very aware that you do want some form of PPE and we have worked extremely hard to source this in Gloves and masks.

Though we follow the above advice and that by following social distancing and regular hand washing is the safest way to keep the virus at bay we have been able to provide gloves to sites. We are also now awaiting a delivery of more Gloves and some face masks that we will issue to those of you that express your need for them. PLEASE note we will not have a massive supply as you can imagine these items are sought by thousands at the moment. I would ask that you think about your needs and if you really need them AND NOTE if you do, they are for your use only at work/travel and will be issued to you for those reasons.

We will continue to update you as correct and factual information is updated by the government and PHE.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Neil Barham'.

**Neil Barham**

**Managing Director**