

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

The Use of Face Coverings in Construction has always reflected the latest Government guidance.

Whilst the Government's [Living with COVID-19](#) plan is clear that the pandemic is not yet over, the removal of the Working Safely during Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance, along with the health and safety requirement for employers to explicitly consider COVID-19 in their risk assessments, from 1 April 2022 means that the Use of Face Coverings in Construction is no longer current and remains available as a reference document.

The [Site Operating Procedures](#) also remain available as a reference document.

The Construction Leadership Council (CLC) has published this statement on the use of face coverings on construction sites in response to coronavirus to help provide a consistent approach across the industry. It is based on Government guidance in [England](#) and other restrictions and advice may apply in [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#).

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, which are usually worn to protect the face and eyes, are classed as PPE and protect the user, 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 Government Position

The Government suggests that face coverings should be worn in crowded and enclosed spaces where people may come into contact with others they don't normally meet. Employers can choose to ask workers to wear a face covering, even though they are not legally required to, but need to consider reasonable adjustments for workers with disabilities, as well as other obligations to workers arising from legislation. Workers may also choose to wear a face covering where it is not legally required.

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

CLC Position

Where workers on site are not required to wear Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and their workplace is crowded and enclosed (which may include welfare and changing facilities, site offices, site meeting rooms or site transport) and they come into contact with others they do not normally meet, their employer should make face coverings available and they should be worn.