

Choosing the right mask for the level of risk

Type/mask type/standard	Reusable	Surgical/medical mask	Dust/breathing protection	Exhalation valve PPE** complying with EN 146	Period of wear in hrs	Certificate/test report available *	Protects the wearer from viruses/bacteria	Protects the wearer's surroundings from viruses/bacteria	Notes
Hygiene mask					2-3 hrs			√	Catches large droplets
Hygiene mask, EN 14683 Type I					2-3 hrs	√		√	Catches large droplets
Hygiene mask, EN 14683 Type II		√			2-3 hrs	√	√ (limited, depending on the fit)	√	Catches large droplets
Hygiene mask, EN 14683 Type II R		√			2-3 hrs	√	√ (limited, depending on the fit)	√	High level of protection against viruses/bacteria, provides protection against fluids (blood; droplet infections)
FFP1 breathing protection, CE EN 149			√		4 hrs	√		√	Minimal protection against infections, functions as PPE** in accordance with EN 149
FFP1 breathing protection, CE EN 149			√	√	4 hrs	√		√ (limited, due to the exhalation valve)	Minimal protection against infections, functions as PPE** in accordance with EN 149
*FFP2 breathing protection, CE EN 149			√		4 hrs	√	√	√	Protection against infections, function as PPE** in accordance with EN 149
*FFP2 breathing protection, CE EN 149			√	√	4 hrs	√	√	√ (limited, due to the exhalation valve)	Protection against infections, function as PPE** in accordance with EN 149
*FFP3 breathing protection, CE EN 149			√		8 hrs	√	√	√	Protection against infections, function as PPE** in accordance with EN 149
*FFP3 breathing protection, CE EN 149			√	√	8 hrs	√	√	√ (limited, due to the exhalation valve)	Protection against infections, function as PPE** in accordance with EN 149
Fabric face mask	√							√	Catches large droplets
KN95 mask, GB2626-2006 (CN standard)						√	√ (limited as these masks do not provide sufficient protection against aerosols)	√	Not approved as FFP2 masks as they have not been tested with fluid aerosols in accordance with PPE** standard EN 149
N95 mask, NIOSH (US standard)						√	√ (limited as these masks do not provide sufficient protection against aerosols)	√	Not approved as FFP2 masks as they have not been tested with fluid aerosols in accordance with PPE** standard EN 149

Low risk
 Medium risk
 High risk

**PPE = Personal Protective Equipment / *For FFP masks, you can check the homepage of <https://ec.europa.eu> to see whether the notified body (4-digit numerical code next to the CE mark) holds the approval for PPE mask tests. This link also contains a list of fake certificates: <https://www.eu-esf.org/covid-19/4513-covid-19-suspicious-certificates-for-ppe>

Types of mask



Reusable fabric face masks, washable



Hygiene masks

Hygiene mask EN 14683 Type I and Type I R, hygiene masks EN 14683 Type II and Type II R, hygiene mask, surgical mask, fabric face mask, KN95, N95



FFP mask

(FFP2 and FFP3 breathing protection in accordance with EN 149)



Low risk

- When working in a well-ventilated indoor environment
- When visiting a park or open-air facility



Medium risk

- When participating in a public gathering
- When using public transport
- When working in a crowded environment
- When isolating at home or when living in confined spaces with other people



High risk

- When in prolonged contact with infected patients
- When participating in or being present during medical procedures
- Medical professionals providing care at quarantine facilities or carrying out tests on infected patients