

# Citation

## COVID-19

# Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and facemasks

A free guide from Citation's Health and Safety experts.



# COVID-19: Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and facemasks

While we're all still waiting to find out when lockdown will be lifted, you'll no doubt have spent some time thinking about what the new world of work will be like.

We've heard from many of our clients, and business owners in the wider community, who are starting to think about how their organisation and people will adapt to the new normal that comes on the other side of COVID-19.

Our Health & Safety experts have put together some key considerations when it comes to getting your business back to where it needs to be.

In this, the second issue in our series of guides, we're looking at Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and facemasks

Keep an eye out for new editions on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), fire safety, and safe hygiene practices, coming soon!

## Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) and facemasks

Many countries around the world are now starting to request, and some even require, that people wear facemasks when out in public to try to mitigate the spread of coronavirus.

There's plenty of debate around just how much a mask can actually protect a person, however, it seems like wearing the right type of mask does offer some protection from cough droplets that spread the virus.

So, it's a possibility that we in the UK may be asked to start wearing masks when we're out in public. And this will naturally be something that you will have to consider when you're opening your business back up.

## What facemask do I use?



There's many different types of face mask available. You've probably seen some of them being discussed in newspapers. It can be confusing when presented with so many options out there. The first thing you need to do is a Risk Assessment to establish two things: whether you need your people to wear facemasks and what type of face masks is best suited to the task at hand.

- Have you risk assessed your workplace on the need for face masks?
- Have you established what type of face mask is required?

## REMEMBER...

if your risk assessment finds that a face mask is necessary, you are legally required to provide them to your people!





## Can I make someone wear a facemask?

If your risk assessment finds that face masks, or any other type of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), is necessary to do the job then it's legally required that your people do. Anyone working around dusty environments in construction knows this is priority at all times, not just during the COVID-19 crisis.

However, if wearing face masks is new to your workplace, then you might have a challenge on your hands. To get people used to wearing a mask, it's down to you to provide the education necessary to explain why you're asking people to do this and to stress its importance.

- How do you brief your team on the move to wearing facemasks?
- Do you have reminders around the workplace – such as posters – communicating the need for masks?
- Is your workplace culture set up to challenge someone who isn't wearing a mask?

## How do I make sure face masks fit?

When you're asking people to wear a face mask – or any other type of RPE your risk assessment has identified – you need to carry out a **face fit test**. This is a method of checking that close-fitting RPE is suitable to the facial features of an individual and provides an adequate seal on their face to reduce the risk of exposure.

Just a few things you'll need to consider when fitting for RPE are:

- Do you have the right training available on how to put on and take off the masks?
- Have you got a competent and qualified person in place to carry out the face fit testing?
- Do you have the right type of masks?

## How can Citation help?

Thanks to our many years of working with businesses across the country – especially during this unprecedented time – we know that the central tenants of Health & Safety are vital to keeping your people safe and your business compliant with the law.

When you partner with us, our team of experts become an extended part of your team. So we're on hand to make sure that you've got access to all the information, tools and templates you need to keep you compliant from day one.

Some of the great resources we can offer you include:



24/7 access to our team of Health & Safety experts.



Checklists to get you thinking about what you need to do to get back to business safely



Example risk assessments to use as a base for your business, so you can be confident no stone is left unturned.



Factsheets packed with all the details you need to know, not just about managing the risks of COVID-19 in the workplace, but on countless other Health & Safety topics along with best-practice guidance.



Elearning modules and team briefings so you can rest assured that everyone understands their responsibilities in the workplace.

If you're ready to start planning your return to business and you want the help, guidance and advice of our expert team, you can call us on **0345 844 1111** for a chat about what you need and to get the ball rolling.