

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

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 Position

The use of **face coverings** in response to coronavirus is mandatory for members of the public in an increasing number of specified places, most of which meet all of the following criteria:

- enclosed public spaces
- where social distancing isn't always possible
- where people come into contact with others they do not normally meet.

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 that: *Workplaces should not encourage the precautionary use of extra PPE to protect against COVID-19 outside clinical settings or when 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 (which may include welfare and changing facilities, site offices or site meeting rooms) meets **all** of the criteria below, their employer should make face coverings available and they should be worn in:

- an enclosed space;
- where social distancing isn't always possible; and
- where they come into contact with others they do not normally meet.

In line with [Government guidance](#) on premises providing hospitality, face coverings **must** be worn in canteens except when seated at a table to eat or drink.

Current Social Distancing Requirements

The [Site Operating Procedures](#) should be implemented on construction sites and workers should maintain a distance of two metres, or one metre with risk mitigation where two metres is not viable.

National guidance on Social Distancing in [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) should be adhered to off-site.

Local restrictions, which could be different to national guidance, may also apply.