

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

Public Health England

Guidance

COVID-19: decontamination in non-healthcare settings

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Background and scope of guidance

The advice in this document can be applied to any non-healthcare setting such as workplaces, offices, waiting rooms, hotel rooms, student accommodation and boarding schools where a possible or confirmed COVID-19 case has spent time while symptomatic. For the purposes of this guidance, a possible case of COVID-19 is someone undergoing testing but COVID-19 has not yet been excluded, and a confirmed case is someone known to have a positive laboratory test for COVID-19.

The guidance describes the cleaning required, the appropriate disposal of materials, the disinfection of equipment and hard surfaces, and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn. There is separate published guidance for [healthcare settings](#) and for those [in self isolation](#) at home.

Previous experience of new coronaviruses (SARS-CoV & MERS-CoV) has been used to inform this guidance. The risk of infection transmission depends on numerous factors, including the type of surfaces contaminated, the amount of virus shed from the individual, the time the individual spent in the setting and the time since the individual was last in the setting.

The infection risk from environmental contamination will decrease over time, but it is still unclear at what point there is no risk of transmission from the environment; however, studies of SARS and MERS suggest that, in most circumstances, the risk is likely to be reduced significantly after 72 hours.

Principles of environmental decontamination after the case has left the setting or area

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The minimum PPE required to be worn for decontaminating an area where a possible or confirmed case has been includes disposable gloves and apron. Hands should be washed with soap and water after all PPE has been removed.

If a risk assessment of the setting indicates that a higher level of contamination may be present (for example where unwell individuals have slept such as a hotel room or boarding school dormitory) or

there is visible contamination with body fluids, then the need for additional PPE such as a surgical facemask and full-face visor should be considered. The local Health Protection Team can advise on this.

Selecting the right Respiratory Protection Equipment

The World Health Organisation (WHO), recommends that grade N95 or FFP2 respirator (or higher) with good breathability and a design that does not collapse against the mouth are used, and Public Health England are recommending the use of FFP3 filter type respirators that conform to EN149.

An FFP3 respirator provides an increased level of protection than an FFP2. Arco suggest selecting an FFP3 mask which conforms to EN 149.

The Importance of Face Fit Testing when wearing tight fitting respiratory protection

If the company Risk Assessment requires the individual to wear additional PPE such as a tight-fitting face mask (disposable mask, full face mask or reusable half mask etc) when carrying out a specific task, then it is important to ensure the mask fits the individual correctly to ensure it provides the assumed level of protection. To put it simply a tight-fitting mask that does not fit the individual is not going to be effective.

Tight-fitting respiratory protection relies on a seal to achieve the level of protection. A seal can only be achieved if the area in which the mask comes into contact with the skin is kept clean and hair free. Any individuals with facial hair around the area in which the mask comes into contact with the skin will not be able to achieve a good fit.

The HSE have published a guidance note <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg479.pdf> which provides supporting information for employers around the types of masks requiring face fit testing and the different test methods (Qualitative and Quantitative).

Quantitative Testing (Portacount method)

- Used for all tight-fitting respirators, including Full Face Masks.
- The mask is attached to a particle counting machine (a Portacount).
- The machine detects whether airborne particles are passing into the mask via a break in the seal.
- At the end of the test the machine will give a 'pass' or 'fail'.

Qualitative Testing (Hood method)

- Used only for disposable and half face masks.
- The individual wears a hood over the head and shoulders and the tester sprays a bitter solution into the hood.
- The wearer carries out a series of exercises, such as turning the head from side to side.
- If the individual can taste the solution, there is a break in the mask's seal.

UK Team of Respiratory Specialists

Arco have one of the largest Fit2Fit accredited team of respiratory specialists in the UK who are available to offer respiratory training and face fit tests for companies who require individuals to wear tight-fitting respiratory protection as part of their job.

<https://www.arcoservices.co.uk/services/respiratory-protection-services/face-fit-testing>

Our respiratory specialists can visit your site to carry out Quantitative face fit tests on any individuals who need to wear disposable masks, half masks, full face masks to carry out their job. The Quantitative method of face fit testing is the most accurate method and incorporates the use of a Portacount (Particle Counting) machine to measure the individuals fit.

[Click here to see more frequently asked questions about face fit testing](#)

Face Fit Testing should only be carried out by a competent person

Respiratory Protection Equipment is designed to protect the wearer from hazardous substances entering the body through our respiratory system. Selecting the correct respiratory protection is essential to ensure it provides the right level of protection against the hazard, it fits the individual correctly and is compatible with any other PPE (goggles, face shields etc). **Only a competent person should carry out a face fit test.**

We offer both Quantitative and Qualitative training courses for companies who want to carry out face fit tests internally. Please contact services@arcoservices.co.uk for more information.

The BSIF Fit2Fit companion supporting the recent HSE INDG479 recommends a suitable interval for repeat fit testing is two years. In some situations, more frequent testing may be more appropriate.

Maintaining your Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE)

If you have issued employees with re-usable Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE) such as full face masks, half masks or powered respirators you must implement a monthly inspection regime to ensure your RPE continues to function correctly. The monthly inspections must be recorded.

Poorly maintained respiratory equipment may not offer the assumed level of protection to the wearer as components often need to be changed (filters) or become worn (face seals, head tops, breathing tubes etc).

Our Respiratory Teams can offer regular Servicing and Maintenance of your RPE. All inspections are recorded detailing the date of inspection, who inspected the RPE, serial numbers, make & model, description of any parts changed as required under COSHH. The service can be carried out at your site or at one of our service centres in Enfield, Warrington or Hull.

We carry out inspections on a range of Respiratory Equipment including:

- Half Masks
- Full face Masks
- Powered Respirators
- Airline Respirators
- Escape Respirators
- Self Contained Breathing Apparatus

For more info contact services@arcoservices.co.uk or call 0330 390 0822