

# Information Sheet: Wearing Surgical Masks for Work Activities during the Covid-19 Pandemic



## Background

For certain work activities at ETH Zurich, for example in a laboratory or a workshop, surgical masks must be worn if a minimum distance of 1.5 metres cannot be maintained. Surgical masks can be ordered by authorised employees from the ETHIS web shop (Keyword "Covid-19"). ETH Zurich will procure and make available surgical masks in situations where they are essential for work activities.

The maximum purchase amount for every order is two packs of 50 units every two weeks. If you need more surgical masks, please contact [bueromaterial@fc.ethz.ch](mailto:bueromaterial@fc.ethz.ch) with a supporting explanation.

## Rules

- The maximum supply for two weeks (20 units) is dispensed to each team member
- The surgical masks only need to be worn in close contacts during work activities, mainly in laboratories and workshops, but also in other scenarios such as in a driver's cabin.

Other personal masks used in the area of work safety and health protection (against particulates, gases, etc.) that have **no** connection with the Covid-19 pandemic are listed in the Information Sheet on Personal Protective Equipment ([Types of masks](#)). PPE masks (with or without a valve) should not be used as a substitute for surgical masks.

## Correct use of surgical masks

- Always maintain the recommended safety distance between other people
- Before putting on the surgical mask, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water
- Carefully put on the protective mask so that your nose and mouth are fully covered. Then tighten the mask so that the mask sits snugly on your face
- Do not touch the mask once you have put it on. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water each time after coming into contact with a used surgical mask, for example when taking the mask off
- Surgical masks can be worn for up to four hours but should be replaced as soon as they become moist
- Disposable surgical masks must not be reused. If you need to take off the mask before the end of the four-hour period (during a break, for example), you can keep it in a paper bag or envelope
- Throw away disposable surgical masks immediately after taking them off. If there is no waste bin with a lid available, place and seal the used mask in a hygienic bag.

## Sources

- The Lancet: Rational use of face masks in the COVID-19 pandemic → (Accessed: 10.4.2020)
- Preprint on medRxiv: Physical interventions to interrupt or reduce the spread of respiratory viruses. Part 1 – Face masks, eye protection and person distancing: systematic review and meta-analysis → (Accessed: 10.04.2020)
- <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/de/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/information-fuer-die-aerzteschaft/schutzmassnahmen.html> → (Accessed: 17.04.2020).
- <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/de/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/masken.html> → (Accessed:22.08.2020)

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