

Mask use: when it should be used and by whom

In the framework of individual protection measures and protection of public health, the use of a mask is an **additional measure** and it does not replace the implementation of other protective practices such as social distancing, hands sanitization, cleansing of surfaces, natural ventilation of places of residence and work etc.

For the general population, the use of a single-use mask **is recommended (though it is not compulsory)** for citizens attending **closed spaces frequently attended by large crowds** such as super-markets, malls, drugstores, banks, various departments/services of the public and wider public sector that receive public, public transport vehicles etc.

With regard to the **staff**, the use of a single-use mask is **compulsory** for those working in:

- Public transport vehicles (e.g. bus drivers)
- Interior spaces of private businesses, departments of the public and wider public sector that receive public and
- People working in positions where they interact directly with the public in retail trade businesses (e.g. cashiers, citizens' services etc)

Following a decision made by the Ministerial Council, the Ministry of Health is going to provide free of charge a number of masks to those businesses in order to cover (at least partially) the needs of their staff. The Ministry of Health has already announced a call for tenders in order to buy 9 million surgical masks, part of which is going to be distributed, in cooperation with the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation, the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Cyprus Confederation of Professional Craftsmen and Shopkeepers, to businesses of the private sector that have been affected by the situation. Number of masks is also going to be distributed to departments of the public and wider public sector that receive public.

The Ministry of Health would also like to reiterate the **right way** of using the mask:

1. The mask covers the part of the face that includes the peak of the nose, the mouth and the chin.
2. Before wearing or removing the mask, you have to wash your hands rinsing with water and soap or alcohol anti-septic solution.
3. Remove the mask starting from behind, you should NEVER touch the front part of the mask.
4. After use, throw the mask to a wastebin.