

**20,000 employees to be tested in companies to reopen in first phase of lifting measures;  
Free masks in partial coverage of needs**

The Ministry of Health will go ahead with the testing of an additional 20,000 employees whose businesses will resume operation in the near future, as part of a strategy to gradually lift restrictive measures.

The relevant decision was taken today, 29 April 2020, by the Council of Ministers, approving the proposal presented by the Minister of Health, Mr. Constantinos Ioannou, following a recommendation by the epidemiological team. The decision was made in the context of the policy implemented from the beginning by the Ministry of Health to enforce testing in the population of Cyprus, pursuant to the testing program of 20,000 employees in the public, wider public and private sectors, the National Guard, the Fire Service and the Police, the testing program for 2,000 employees in small and medium-sized enterprises of retail beverage and food businesses and nursing homes, as well as random sampling of 800 people.

The new program will examine 20,000 employees in companies that will resume operation in the framework of removing the restrictive measures of the first phase and will have direct contact with the public. More details about the companies and how the testing will be conducted will be announced in the coming days.

At the same time, in the context of the recommendation by the Ministry of Health for mandatory use of masks in retail customer service employees, the Council of Ministers approved the free provision of masks to these companies, to meet part of their needs. Free masks will also be given to front office departments in the public and wider public sector.