

Mask Ratings Guide

COVID-19 protection or Just Dust Rated? Here's our Mask Rating Guide

Which mask protects me from dust, viruses and bacteria?

Dust Masks protect employees against airborne particles such as powders and dust. They are very important for a range of agricultural, construction and pharmaceutical work not to mention medical-related situations too. Different masks provide different levels of protection, so it's extremely important to find the right level of protection for you and your staff. EN 149 designates three dust mask ratings; FFP1, FFP2, and FFP3. See below to find out more about these ratings.

Update: COVID-19 (Coronavirus) - What is it and how does it spread?

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection with similar symptoms to the common cold. The illness largely affects older people, young children and those who are already ill. Due to how COVID-19 spreads, respiratory protection is key. The virus spreads through sneezing or coughing, passing on particles of the infection through the air.

How can I protect myself and avoid COVID-19?

Respiratory masks are the best way to ensure the disease cannot spread through the air via sneezes or coughing. Surgical masks are recommended to those who are more likely to contract or already have the infection to avoid spreading it further. Masks such as FFP3 and FFP2 masks are ideal for those who are not currently ill or exhibiting symptoms, or health care professionals taking precaution to not catch the virus when working or being near those who may carry symptoms.

FFP1 Dust Masks - for sanding, drilling and cutting dust protection only

FFP1 Dust Masks protect against low levels of dust, as well as solid and liquid aerosols. It protects against materials in concentrations up to four times occupational exposure limit (OEL) or four times assigned protection factor (APF). FFP1 Dust Masks are suitable for hand sanding, cutting or drilling and are not suitable for protection from bacteria and viruses.

FFP2 Dust Masks - suitable for virus protection

[FFP2 Dust Masks](#) protect against moderate levels of dust, as well as solid and liquid aerosols. FFP2 Dust Masks have a higher level of protection than FFP1 – FFP2 masks protect against materials in concentrations up to 12x OEL or 4x APF. FFP2 masks are ideal for plastering and sanding. This type of disposable mask is mainly used in construction, agriculture, and healthcare professionals against influenza viruses.

FFP3 Dust Masks

[FFP3 Dust Masks](#) protect against higher levels of dust. They also protect against solid and liquid aerosols. FFP3 masks protect against materials in concentrations up to fifty times OEL or twenty times APF. FFP3 masks are suitable for handling hazardous powders, such as those found in the pharmaceutical industry.

How to Use Dust Mask Ratings

It is very important to consider the type and level of contaminants to which workers will be exposed. Once you have properly evaluated the airborne hazards in your workplace, you can begin to choose dust masks based on their FFP rating. The best dust mask for your workplace will be one that meets the appropriate FFP rating and is comfortable and convenient for your staff. Here is a quick guide to the protection levels provided by different dust mask ratings.

And Finally...

For all your face mask requirements ensure you speak to the team at PPE Stores on 0115 952 3096.