

General Information regarding Face Masks and Face Coverings in relation to Coronavirus – Covid-19

An update from your employer Ideal Cleaning Services Limited

On the 11.05.20 the Government issued a document entitled “OUR PLAN TO REBUILD: The UK Government’s COVID-19 recovery strategy”. Within this document advice is given regarding Face-coverings as it is anticipated that more people will return to work.

The advice now is that *“people should aim to wear a face-covering in enclosed spaces where social distancing is not always possible and they come into contact with others that they do not normally meet, for example on public transport or in some shops.”* These face-coverings referred to in the guidance are *“Homemade cloth face-coverings...”* and not medical or surgical Face Masks.

However, it goes on to say that *“Face-coverings are not intended to help the wearer, but to protect against inadvertent transmission of the disease to others if you have it asymptotically.”*

N.B. Face Masks and Face Coverings do not afford full protection, they only help to reduce the risk of transmission from the wearer.

It also makes the distinction between Face Coverings and Face Masks – *“A face covering is not the same as a facemask such as the surgical masks used... by healthcare workers. These supplies must continue to be reserved for those who need it.”*

The Company has undertaken a Covid-19 Risk Assessment and has considered and assessed the Government guidance on, and the requirements for, Face Masks and Face Coverings. From this we have arrived at four risk categories based on the working environment and how our staff travel to their place of work. These escalate from Category ‘A’ No Face Covering required to Category ‘D’ FFP2 Mask Required.

The company has procured supplies of FFP2 Face Masks and we have also ordered the production of Face-coverings. We currently have a limited supply of FFP2 Face Masks and we are awaiting delivery of Face-coverings. We will be prioritising the issue of **FFP2 Face Masks** to those staff that are working within Healthcare settings, staff cleaning multiple locations within the Social Housing sector and those where Social Distancing cannot be maintained i.e. **those we have identified as Category ‘D’**. Face Coverings will be issued to those in Category “C”.

It is anticipated that a proportion of Ideal staff will not need to use public transport and will be cleaning in a non-healthcare setting, will be working when no client staff or members of the public are present and where the maintenance of Social Distancing can be maintained. In these cases no FFP2 Masks or Face Coverings are required. i.e. **those we have identified as Category “A” and Category “B”**.

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For the sake of clarity these categories and the rationale behind them are as follows:

- **Category ‘A’:** This applies in a situation where the cleaner does not need to use public transport to get to work (and travels to work either in their own vehicle, by bicycle or walks to work) and the cleaner is a lone worker – i.e. They conduct their cleaning work when there are no client staff or members of the public on site and they work on their own. In this scenario - **No Face Mask (FFP2) or Face Covering is Required.**
- **Category ‘B’:** This applies in a situation where the cleaner does not need to use public transport to get to work (and travels to work either in their own vehicle, by bicycle or walks to work) and where they do work with others, once on site, but can do so whilst still maintaining safe Social Distancing. In this scenario – **No Face Mask (FFP2) or Face Covering is Required.**
- **Category ‘C’:** This applies where the cleaner does have to use public transport to get to work, and/or where they do work with others and even though safe distancing can be observed the Client organisation insists that they must wear face coverings. In this scenario – **A basic Face Covering is Required.**
- **Category ‘D’:** This applies where safe distancing cannot be maintained on site e.g. when working in Social Housing Contracts, in Hospitals or Clinics, in Care Homes or when Mobile Operative teams are travelling together in the same vehicle. In this scenario - **A FFP2 Face Mask is required.**

The FFP2 face Masks and the Face Coverings are washable so that they can be reused. **They should be washed by hand using soap and warm water** and allowed to air dry.

It should be remembered that there may be a heightened risk to the wearer as they may be prone to touch the mask in order to adjust it regularly and this may cause a transfer of infection from the hands to the face, even if gloves are being worn.

Gloves are provided to staff for their protection from cleaning chemicals and from infection, but it should be remembered the gloves themselves can pick up infection.

Social distancing and regular hand washing are still the best protective measures to take.

N.B. If you have any concerns or questions on the level of PPE and/or Face Masks/Coverings provided please do not hesitate to contact your Supervisor or Manager.

For those issued and wearing FFP2 Face Masks we have issued a separate document on the correct use and fitting.

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