



COVID-19: Face coverings position statement

14th May 2020

Introduction

NFCC acknowledges the position taken by government in relation to face coverings and welcomes the government's attempts to limit any impact on PPE for front line workers.

The NFCC also notes the differentiation between contact with members of the public (*people that staff do not normally meet**) and colleagues (*people that they regularly come into contact with**) as a way of determining the advice about the suitable utilisation of a face covering when in contact with others.

The NFCC acknowledges the difference between the workplace and other public places where people could meet in an enclosed space and where social distancing might not be able to be maintained. Wearing a face covering is required by law when travelling as a passenger on public transport in England.

This statement also reflects the fact that, unlike other service providers the use of public transport when in work is not required/integral to the role being undertaken.

There is a clear differentiation between a face covering and a face mask (personal protective equipment) and these protective measures should not be confused within the workplace.

As such the NFCC position is clear that the use of face coverings when travelling to and from work is at the discretion of the individual.

When in the workplace face coverings are not mandatory or instructed, social distancing should be practiced. Where close contact with the public is unavoidable then the NFCC guidance on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for front line workers should be applied.

Guidance Notes

The differential between the public (*people that staff do not normally meet**) and people in the workplace (*people that they regularly come into contact with**) has been formed on the basis that within the workplace the safeguards and control measures applied to minimise the spread of the virus are known - and the individuals who are in the workplace are known to have applied those measures when making themselves available for work. As per previous NFCC guidance PPE should be available to crews/individuals when travelling on fire engines or in vehicles in the event that someone becomes unwell with C19 symptoms.

The use of Perspex separation on fire engines as a means of creating separation is not recommended given the nature of the work undertaken, the safety design of the vehicle and the impact on the exchange of key risk critical information whilst on route to an incident.

The wearing of a face covering is an individual choice - face coverings are not PPE.

The exception is on public transport where this is a legal requirement.

Should an individual wish to wear a face covering in the workplace that will be for local determination – subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment being in place given the risk critical nature of the role.

**NFCC PPE Guidance reflects the guidance provided by PHE on PPE during COVID 19*