



## Face masks are effective transmission barriers against infections

Respiratory viruses can lead to significant illness and in some cases even death. One of the most effective infection control strategies is to wear a face mask.

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They play a dual role in containing the air borne spread of respiratory infections.

- *Firstly*, they help in safeguarding our own health by reducing our exposure to respiratory infections; and
- *Secondly*, they prevent onward transmission from the infected individual, thereby protecting others.

Studies have established that wearing a mask can reduce the possibility of a person getting infected by respiratory viruses. [The US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) mentions that a person wearing a surgical mask has 66% lower chance of being infected by Covid-19 compared to someone not wearing a mask.

### **Types of face masks**

Mask wearing benefits us and those around us but which type of mask to choose and when to wear it? There are three main categories of face masks; surgical or medical masks, respirators, and fabric masks. While medical masks are recommended, other types of masks are also acceptable provided they meet certain standards as mentioned in [WHO's guidance](#) . Irrespective of the type of mask chosen, it should be of a good fit with no gaps around the nose and face for it to be effective.

### **When to wear face masks**

Seafarers interact a lot not only with each other but also with shore personnel in foreign ports. Regardless of whether physical distancing can be maintained, it is recommended that for their own safety crew wear a face mask especially when indoors and in close proximity to shore personnel. They should also wear a mask whenever they have symptoms of a respiratory infection to prevent the spread of infection and for the safety of others.

Lastly, we would like to mention that for adequate protection, wearing a mask should be complemented by other precautionary measures such as proper [hand hygiene](#) and exercising [social responsibility](#) .

### **External links**

- [Guidance for Ship Operators for the Protection of the Health of Seafarers \(Fifth Edition\)](#)  
by ICS
- [Implementation guide for management of Covid-19 on cargo ships](#)  
by WHO

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- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public: When and how to use masks](#)  
by WHO
- [Wearing a Mask](#)  
by CDC, US
- [Community Use of Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV-2](#)  
by CDC, US

## **Gard material**

Loss prevention poster: [Face\\_Mask\\_lowres.pdf](#)

Loss prevention poster: [social-responsibility\\_Lowres.pdf](#)

Loss prevention poster: [Gard\\_hand\\_washing\\_Lowres.pdf](#)

Alert: [Be a handwash hero](#)

Alert: [Feeling unwell? Report and recover but don't pass it to others](#)

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