

Supervisors/Crew Leads - please print, share or discuss with your teams, and post in the lunchroom or on bulletin boards.

COVID-19 & KN95 MASKING GUIDANCE

Additional guidance has been provided by public health authorities to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus. It is now recommended that individuals wear the most protective mask that they can, one that fits well and that they will wear consistently. Health Canada states that “while non-medical masks can help prevent the spread of COVID-19, medical masks and respirators provide better protection against COVID-19.”

The City of Edmonton strongly recommends that KN95 or surgical-style masks be used in the workplace, and is providing KN95 disposable masks for employees to protect against COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.

KN95 MASK DESCRIPTION & USE

A KN95 mask is a disposable facepiece that is designed to fit snugly to your face and provide filtration of airborne particles, similar to a N95 respirator. The difference is that a N95 respirator is certified through the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and is approved for use in Canada for occupational health hazards, whereas the KN95 mask is certified through a Chinese standard and at this time is only permitted to be used as a ‘mask’ for COVID-19 transmission prevention in the workplace.

Key considerations for KN95 mask use:

- Recommended as a mask for use against COVID-19 transmission and not as a respirator;
- Are not permitted to be used for occupational health hazards (i.e. dust, silica, etc.) encountered in the workplace (an N95 respirator or other NIOSH-approved respirator must be used);
- Are not required to be fit tested (as they are only permitted for COVID-19 transmission prevention);
- Has a filtering facepiece and results in greater breathing resistance during use;
- In order to safely use a KN95 mask (due to the increase breathing resistance), employees must ensure they are free from certain health conditions (*see Health Screening, below*);
 - If an employee has a listed health condition, they are not permitted to use the KN95 mask and they must contact the COE Occupational Health Nurse (OHN) for assessment
- Though it is not required, being clean shaven and ensuring there are no obstructions with the face seal will increase effectiveness of the mask; and
- If the mask becomes wet or soiled, it should be replaced with a new KN95 mask.

SEE [‘How to make your mask fit properly’](#) FACT SHEET

KN95 MASK DISTRIBUTION TO EMPLOYEES

Business Areas may order KN95 masks through the Corporate Procurement and Supply Services (CPSS) [order form](#).

It is required that the Business Areas ensure that the KN95 mask distribution is controlled to ensure employees are free from health conditions that may affect use (*see Health Screening, below*).

1. Control distribution of KN95 masks by having one individual/team hand out the KN95 masks to those requesting them;
2. Ensure individuals handling the KN95 masks are following proper hand hygiene (washing hands or using hand sanitizer prior to handling); and
3. Ensure first time KN95 mask users review and action (if required) the [Health Screening Review Form](#) prior to using a KN95 mask.

Masks are to be used in conjunction with other COVID-19 safety measures including completing the pre-screen checklist, getting vaccinated, staying home when sick, physical distancing and hand hygiene.

HEALTH SCREENING

KN95 masks are tight fitting and may impact those with certain health conditions because of the breathing resistance encountered while wearing.

A *respirator user health screening form* is not required to be completed for KN95 mask use. However, prior to wearing a KN95 mask for the first time, all users must confirm they are free from health conditions through the KN95 mask [Health Screening Review Form](#).

KN95 MASK FAQs

Q. What is the difference between a KN95 mask and a N95 disposable respirator?

KN95 masks are regulated, tested and approved by the Government of China. N95 respirators are regulated, tested and approved by a North American based organization, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). The testing process performed on the KN95 mask is similar to the testing process performed on N95 masks, however, some differences do exist. Since KN95 masks are not NIOSH approved, they cannot be worn to protect workers from airborne particulate hazards at this time.

Q - Do I need to wear a respirator instead of a face covering or mask for COVID-19 purposes?

No. The City of Edmonton is strongly recommending the use of a well fitting KN95 mask or surgical-style mask as the best option to prevent spread and transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Cloth face coverings are still acceptable to be worn. See the [Face Mask Quick Reference Guide](#) for approved face coverings for COVID-19 transmission prevention.

Q - What if I have a medical condition that does not allow me to use a KN95 mask?

You may use another acceptable alternative. Please refer to the [Face Mask Quick Reference Guide](#) for other options that are available. If none of these options will work for you, please contact your Disability Management Consultant.