

Information on Covid-19

Monday, May 11th, 2020

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can employers procure protective face masks and other personal protective equipment for employees present or returning to the workplace following the easing of the lockdown restrictions?

In addition to the measures taken to increase the production of personal protective equipment at a national level, in particular protective face masks and hydroalcoholic gel, **action is being taken by the Directorate General for Enterprise (Ministry for the Economy and Finance) to facilitate the supply for companies.**

Where can companies buy protective face masks for their employees?

Protective face masks “for the general public”

The government also wanted to facilitate equipment for employees by creating, on March 29, 2020, under the supervision of the French National Agency for Medicines and Health Products Safety (ANSM), **two new categories of face masks tailored for non-healthcare workers:**

- **Individual masks for use by professionals in contact with the public**, filtering at least 90% of three-micron particles. Use intended for people who may come into contact with the public in the context of their professional activities (police, gendarmes, cashiers, etc.).
- **Collective protective masks to protect an entire group**, filtering at least 70% of three-micron particles. To be used by individuals who have occasional contact with other people in the course of their professional activities, for example in a company where a particular role or working conditions should require this.

Following significant mobilization in the French textile industry, 85 prototypes created by 45 companies were validated by the French Ministry of Defence enabling a daily production estimated at 480,000 units.

These face masks can be purchased via the following online marketplaces: [Marketplace “Stopcovid19”](#)

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Supported by the French Ministry for the Economy and Finance, this platform enables manufacturers and distributors of essential products and equipment (personal protective equipment such as masks, hydroalcoholic gel, aprons, etc.), as well as their service providers and subcontractors, to market their offer to health professionals, food distributors and all companies involved in the fight against COVID-19 and needing to protect their staff.

- For more information [click here](#)
- Marketplace « Savoir faire ensemble » : [cliquez ici](#)
- Platform for VSEs and SMEs with fewer than 250 employees, set up by the French Post Office (La Poste) in conjunction with the Ministry for the Economy and Finance and the CCI and CMA networks: [click here](#)
- Also for VSEs and SMEs, orders for single-use surgical masks can be placed via the click and collect system set up by Cdiscount and reserved for professionals, with the support of the state and also in connection with the CCI and CMA networks: [click here](#)

Sanitary masks

Stocks of sanitary masks (in particular FFP2 and surgical masks) are primarily intended for healthcare professionals and health institutes.

The Ministry for Solidarity and Health has updated the strategic guidelines for the distribution of health masks by the state in the context of the gradual easing of the lockdown restrictions: [click here](#)

For the purchase of these sanitary masks, **international sourcing via**

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foreign suppliers remains the solution that companies must prioritize. Companies can purchase directly from foreign producers without the risk of the imported masks being publicly requisitioned. However, imports exceeding five million masks on a sliding quarter must be declared to the state (via the address: [click here](#)), which will have a short period of time (72 hours) to confirm its interest in replacing the buyer in whole or in part; if there is no response after 72 hours, the imported masks are not requisitioned.

The Directorate General for Enterprise (Ministry for the Economy and Finance) is working to facilitate contact between mask importers and French buyers, and to help companies find logistical solutions and remove all identified obstacles.

Should you have any questions, please send a message to the following address: masques.dge@finances.gouv.fr

Regarding the customs aspects, **companies can consult the information file published by French customs authorities** regarding the arrangements in place to facilitate the procedures during the health crisis: [click here](#)

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Moreover, the government has decided to overhaul and soften compliance standards on imported face masks:

- Face masks that comply with the European standard (bearing CE marking) may be imported freely until May 31, 2020, and do not need to be inspected by customs.
- Surgical face masks compliant with American and Chinese standards, as well as FFP2 respirators in compliance with American, Chinese, Australian, New Zealand, Korean and Japanese standards may also be imported and used in France until May 31, 2020. The administration has adopted simplified measures to ease their way through customs.

Non-European importers are invited to gather evidence on the compliance of these imported goods with the abovementioned standards and to include it in the customs clearance files, in particular the technical files establishing, firstly, the compliance of the goods with European or equivalent standards and, secondly, the link between the certificates presented and the imported goods.

These documents are to be sent to the customs declaration office immediately, or at the very latest, upon validation of the declaration.

Companies may contact the regional economic action hubs of the French customs authorities for any assistance needed to prepare these imports.

[French customs import info](#)

[French customs advises](#)

Where can companies buy hydroalcoholic gel?

[The marketplace](#) also allows companies to purchase large quantities of hydroalcoholic gel and solutions (at least 300 liters of hydroalcoholic products per week).

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The Directorate General for Enterprise (Ministry for the Economy and Finance) recommends that companies that cannot consider ordering at least 300 liters should work together to obtain supplies or identify a distributor that could, at its level, obtain supplies through this site or by itself.

In addition, the DGE, in conjunction with all the industry federations concerned, publishes on a daily basis an extended list of producers and their production capacity of industrial quantities in order to make supplies more fluid.

Contact : gelcoronavirus.dge@finances.gouv.fr

For more information, please visit the official French government website: [click here](#)

For more information, please visit:

[Ministry of labour & Employment](#)

[Coronavirus Government Info](#)

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