

Updated Guidance on the Wearing of Barrier Facemasks

The health, safety and welfare of our members remains the centre of gravity for all operations carried out by the DF. While the mandatory wearing of facemasks has been removed by the Government, a duty remains on the employer to provide a safe place of work for their employees.

In line with current Government and HSE advice, DF members where they are medically fit to do so, will continue to wear the issued barrier facemask, in indoor scenarios, where a proximity of 2 meters to other individuals can NOT be maintained or as the local risk assessment dictates. This will be an interim requirement, which is kept under review, until the national threat level reduces.

The DF barrier facemask can be repeatedly washed and will continue to be effective, unless it is structurally compromised. The facemask should be inspected intermittently to ensure its structural integrity. Should there be any structural defects, replacement facemasks should be issued.

DF personnel must also remain cognisant of standard precautions for infection prevention and control at all times. Washing your hands; covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing; clean and disinfecting frequently-touched objects and surfaces; reduce hand shaking, distance yourself where possible from others; and where appropriate it is recommended to avail of the COVID-19 vaccination and subsequent booster vaccines as recommended by the HSE.

[Reference A COS LETTER - COVID-19 Response: Defence Forces Guidance on Reusable Barrier Facemasks Version dated 31 March 2022]