



Guideline of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences

Nose-mouth mask: Correct positioning, handling while wearing and removal and the recycling of used nose-mouth masks	
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1 Introduction and objectives

This guideline describes the proper handling of multi-use textile nose-mouth masks. Only with proper use, proper positioning and removal as well as storage and cleaning of the used masks do these masks offer a certain level of protection for the wearer and the people around them.

In order to protect employees and students at BOKU, certain conditions may require the wearing of a nose-mouth mask on BOKU premises.

2 Area of application

All people entering BOKU premises, no matter whether they are BOKU employees or students.

3 Procedure

3.1 Types of masks and their differences

3.1.1 Textile nose-mouth mask

- These masks are made of commercially available textiles and represent a mechanical barrier to aerosols that are expelled when breathing, coughing or sneezing. They primarily serve to protect people in the surrounding area, and offer the wearer only limited protection. Textile nose-mouth masks are available as disposable and multi-use masks.
- For medical-grade nose-mouth protection (surgical masks), the same principle of protection applies, although these qualify as medical products and therefore fulfil certain requirements. Medical-grade nose-mouth masks may only be used as disposable masks.

3.1.2 Filtering face piece, FFP masks

These masks keep out pollutants and, depending on the version, viruses too. They are considered a piece of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the context of work safety. They must only be used as disposable masks.

- There are masks with and without an exhalation valve.
 - Those without an exhalation valve filter both the air that is breathed in as well as the air that is breathed out.
 - Masks with a valve only filter the air that is breathed in; the air that is breathed out is emitted to the surrounding environment without filtering. Therefore, these masks offer **no protection for other people**.
- Depending on the filter performance, FFP masks are available in three different versions: FFP1, FFP2 and FFP3 masks.

3.2 Method description

This only refers to textile, washable nose-mouth masks.

- Before putting on and removing a nose-mouth mask, the hands must be washed thoroughly (see hand hygiene). If washing is not possible, the hands must be disinfected with hand disinfectant.
- When not required, the nose-mouth mask may be removed and then reused by the same person. For this, however, it must be ensured that this mask can unequivocally be assigned to the wearer. This can be done by affixing a name tag to the straps before putting on the mask for the first time. Where possible, the mask should be hung during interim storage. The exterior of the mask must not touch any surfaces.

3.2.1 Putting on a nose-mouth mask

3.2.1.1 *Putting on a nose-mouth mask with elastic bands (ear loops)*

People who wear glasses must remove these before putting on the mask. To prevent the glasses from fogging up during wearing, the mask must sit tightly in the nose and cheek area, and the glasses must be placed on the face after the mask.

Long hair must be tied back.

- Stretch the mask at the two ear loops and place the upper part of the mask centrally over the bridge of the nose.
- Pull the loops on both sides over the ears from above. The loops must sit tightly behind the ears.
- Pull on the lower ear straps to stretch the mask so that the lower part of the mask covers the chin.
- The mask must sit tightly, and must not slip when you move your head backwards and forwards.

You must also make sure to seal the sides well.

3.2.1.2 *Putting on a nose-mouth mask with straps for tying*

People who wear glasses must remove these before putting on the mask. To prevent the glasses from fogging up during wearing, the mask must sit tightly in the nose and cheek area, and the glasses must be placed on the face after the mask.

Long hair must be tied back.

- Pick up the mask by the upper straps.
- Place the upper part of the mask centrally over the bridge of the nose and pass the straps past the ears.
- Fasten the upper straps at the back of the head by tying a bow.
- Now stretch the mask by pulling on the lower straps near to the mask, until the mask is stretched across the chin.
- Now pass the lower straps below the ears and behind your head, and fasten the mask by tying a bow in the neck area.
- The mask must sit tightly, and must not slip when you move your head backwards and forwards.

You must also make sure to seal the sides well.

If a metal wire is built into the nose-mouth mask, this must be moulded to the nose/cheeks using two fingers.

3.2.2 While wearing

- At no time while wearing the nose-mouth mask are you allowed to touch the outer surface with your hands. If you do, however, you must immediately wash your hands thoroughly, and if this is not possible, you must disinfect them.
- As a general principle, you must refrain from touching the face and head area with your hands. People who wear glasses must not adjust their glasses at the nose bridge. If the glasses have slipped, they must be carefully pushed back into place by the temples.
- The masks must be changed after a maximum of 4 hours of wearing time, or any time they get wet.

3.2.3 Removing the masks

Before removing the mask, you must wash your hands thoroughly; if this is not possible, you must disinfect your hands.

If masks are removed only temporarily, it must be possible to unequivocally assign a mask to a person (by affixing a label to the straps). The best method of interim storage is to hang the masks up. If this is not possible, it is permitted to wear the mask on the head. However, the outer surface of the mask must never come into contact with the scalp.

3.2.3.1 Removing a nose-mouth mask with elastic bands (ear loops)

- Use both hands to carefully grasp the straps behind the ears and pull them over the ears, while still holding the mask stretched out in front of the face.
- As soon as the ears are free, use both hands to pull the mask forwards and away from your face by the ear loops.

3.2.3.1 Removing a nose-mouth mask with straps for tying

- Untie the lower straps of the mask.
- Then carefully untie the upper straps using both hands, and stretch the mask with both hands (gently pull on the straps to the left and right) and pull the mask forwards and away from your face.

3.2.4 Sending for recycling

- Used protective masks that will no longer be used must be collected in a container or bin (or also in laundry boxes without a grid).
- These used masks must be washed in a washing machine at a temperature of at least 60 °C within 24 hours.
- Before loading the washing machine, the operator of the washing machine must select the correct settings for the washing machine and insert the right amount of laundry detergent into the detergent compartment.
- The recommended programme is a cotton programme at a temperature of at least 60 °C, and the addition of laundry detergent in accordance with the detergent manufacturer's specifications.



- Disposable gloves must be worn when loading the washing machine with the used protective masks. The disposable gloves must first be checked for any damage (holes, tears). After touching used protective masks, do not touch any other objects.
- After loading the washing machine, remove the disposable gloves (observe the guideline for the use of gloves when doing so).
CAUTION: Do not close or start the washing machine yet!
- Next, wash your hands thoroughly and, if necessary, disinfect your hands.
- Now close the machine and start the programme.
- The container for the used protective masks can be treated with surface disinfectant.
- Following the laundry cycle, the nose-mouth masks must be dried in a tumble dryer.
- After this procedure, the nose-mouth masks are ready to be worn again.

3.3 Safety precautions

- Before putting on and removing the masks, you must wash your hands; if this is not possible, your hands must be disinfected.
- The mask must completely cover the nose and mouth, and must also cover the chin (only covering the tip of the nose is not sufficient!).
- The mask must not sit too loosely, which is why long hair must also be tied back.
- People with glasses must remove these before putting on and removing the mask.
- After the mask has been put on for the first time, you must no longer touch the outer surface of the mask.
- Never allow the outer surface of a used mask to come into contact with your face.
- If the mask gets wet, or at the latest after 4 hours of wearing time, the mask must be replaced with a fresh nose-mouth mask.
- Used masks intended for recycling must only be touched with disposable gloves.

4 References and indications

4.1 Required documents

Illustrative documents of the emergency services

4.2 Abbreviations

BOKU.....University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences

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FFP.....filtering face piece