

# Round Table: «How to proceed with the recommendations for community masks?»

## Questions & Answers of the Experts

Question	Answer
Why is the filtration efficiency (FE) not compatible with other standards (e.g. NIOSH 90, 95, 99%)?	The measurement principle of the FE is always similar, but the particle sizes are different.
Why is the particle size not better adapted to the size of the virus (e.g. Wayre 75 nm)?	Because the virus is surrounded by water molecules. Therefore, the aerosols, which contain the virus, are usually larger than 100 nm.
Why do we test at a particle size of 1000 nm and not at particle sizes of 100 nm?	The FE of surgical masks is determined with help of bacteria, which are larger than 1000 nm. Determining the FE at 100 nm would be close to FFP masks, but they only have moderate air permeability and a low wearing comfort. Therefore, they are not practicable for the general population.
There are dozens of manufacturers of community masks on the market. Many of these masks only offer a very low filter performance. Such masks look nice and are inexpensive, but these masks hardly protect. People around such mask wearers cannot recognise such poor quality masks. Will there be an import ban or a clear obligation to declare such poor quality masks in the future?	Currently, there is no state-protected conformity mark for community masks, nor are there any legal requirements for this type of mask.
It is assumed that the filtering performance of the community mask decreases after washing. How much does the filtering performance decrease with each wash cycle? What is the maximum number of times a community mask should be washed?	The influence of washing and the temperature at which the community mask are washed are currently under scientific investigation.

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<p>The main purpose of community masks is the collective protection by reducing virus emission. Is this adequately detected by the filtration test (or splash test)?</p>	<p>There is not a 100% certainty that there will be no spreading of the virus. The FE test is performed with a particle size of 1 micrometer, which is in the order of an aerosol. The FE should be &gt;70% according to the recommendation.</p>
<p>Why are community masks being promoted, in addition to proven PSA masks and medical devices? According to my information, there is not a single accredited laboratory in Switzerland for the testing of PPE masks according to EN 149:2001 and medical devices according to EN 14683:2019. Why don't we build up competence in Switzerland in the proven standard environment EN 149:2001 / EN 14683:2019?</p>	<p>The community masks are intended as a supplement to ensure the availability of filter masks and surgical masks in their respective fields of application. In this context, it is accepted that the level of protection is unlikely to be equivalent to that provided by filter masks and surgical facemasks. It is intended to define a minimum quality requirement for masks for the general public.</p>
<p>How to deal with inferior "hygiene masks", which are sold as medical masks?</p>	<p>In the leaflet of the 01.09.2020, Swissmedic states the following: If medical face masks on the Swiss market are damaged or of poor quality, the point of sale should be contacted.</p> <p>In such cases, it is possible to inform Swissmedic directly. Further information on the procedure and the e-mail address for reporting can be found in the leaflet.</p>
<p>What temperature is required to wash the community masks?</p>	<p>The influence of washing and the temperature at which the community masks are washed are currently under scientific investigation.</p>
<p>How do you deal with innovative solutions, e.g. ski masks with filters, for community masks that do not meet the dimensional requirements of the recommendation? Or disposable community masks which are not washable?</p>	<p>The Swiss National Covid-19 Science Task Force has deliberately not clearly defined the design requirements, as it does not want to prevent innovative approaches.</p>
<p>Are there any test procedures that should be attenuated? If so, which ones?</p>	<p>With regard to the emerging normative documents for community masks, the responsible national and international working group will lead this discussion. Interested Swiss stakeholders can participate in the</p>

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	drafting of the international and national document via SNV.
It is said, that there is a manufacturer who wants to launch a reusable mask with exchangeable FFP2 filter elements. I see a big market potential here and the protection against infection would be much higher compared to community masks. What do you think about developing a reusable FFP2 mask?	Reusable FFP masks are effectively developed, but they usually have a low wearing comfort and therefore cannot be worn for a whole day.

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