

## COVID-19 and face coverings: what amounts to a "medical-grade" face covering?

### **With the Omicron variant now in the New Zealand community, the government has amended the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021 to tighten up the rules around face-coverings.**

From 4 February 2022, workers who are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 (either pursuant to a public health order, or pursuant to the COVID-19 protection framework) must wear a "medical-grade" face covering while at work. This includes workers at food and drink businesses, gyms and close-proximity businesses.

The big question from a lot of businesses has been, what exactly is a "medical-grade" face-covering?

The COVID-19 Public Health Response (Protection Framework) Order 2021 defines medical-grade face covering as one which meets or exceeds any of the following standards:

1. Type IIR of The European Standard
2. Level 2 of the ASTM Standard
3. Type 4381:2015 of the Australian Standard

In layperson's terms, the following face-coverings meet or exceed the above standards:

- P2 masks
- N95/KN95 masks
- Readily available surgical masks

If you wish to know more about the above Standards, copies of them are available free of charge from the

Ministry of Health's head office, and are expected to be provided at additional locations at a later date.

Copies of the above standards are also available for purchase from [Standards New Zealand](#), [ASTM International](#), and [Standards Australia](#) respectively.

#### Want to know more?

If you have any questions about the COVID-19 Protection Framework as it applies to your business, please contact our specialist [Employment Team](#).