

Message

---

**From:** Van Tam, Jonathan [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=D29C846FC8FA4678B419C6F0DC3836F3-JVANTAM]  
**Sent:** 04/02/2020 14:53:09  
**To:** [Name Redacted] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=0a24c97080214d5db97dff421f8640] NR [Name Redacted]  
[Name Redacted] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=046e189c6d5f453791a1d9b078aebce9] NR  
**CC:** [Name Redacted] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=d21258c9254e4e32942f15c21ee78f6f] NR [Name Redacted]  
[Name Redacted] [/o=ExchangeLabs/ou=Exchange Administrative Group (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/cn=Recipients/cn=731ae41932914a2b90daa92ec8cc56dd] NR  
**Subject:** Re: Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

There is no clearly definitive advice. N is a US standard, Europe uses the FFP classification.

1. There are many N95 (=FFP2) type respirators made by multiple manufacturers. Not all devices fit all face shapes and sizes. Face size and shape may vary across the world.
2. N95 and N99 (=FFP3) respirators are not take out of box and wear devices. They require individual fit-testing to check for leaks. I.e there is a training requirement.
3. Typically devices last for 4hrs then need changing. In HC settings these devices are generally appropriate for close contact with higher risk pathogens and aerosol generating procedures.
4. Wearing unvalved respirators is generally more uncomfortable than valved. Some people have real tolerability issues with unvalved- most don't.
5. There are theoretical concerns that a valve offers a potential splash hazard for splashy healthcare procedures hence some respirators have shrouded valves.
6. Naturally there is an appreciable price premium for valved devices.

But essentially the answer is respirators require training before use and opinions, preferences, and budgets vary.

I am on the EU call where it is clear the EU countries can't source respiratory facial protection and many are facing shortages. I honestly think there is a higher wider X/govt policy point about whether if DFID can even find stock on the international market it is good sense to procure for others until it is manifestly clear that the UK has sufficient to meet its own RWC needs.

Please can this be escalated within policy. I am quite concerned.

Regards

JVT

---

**From:** [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2020 2:21 pm

**To:** Van Tam, Jonathan

**Subject:** RE: Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

They're currently purchasing for DFID stockpiling, with an end destination & usage setting as yet undetermined.

The reason they're asking is that thus far they've been guided by WHO specifications (which do not mention valves at all) and the request by the Chinese government (attached) which does mention valves under one of the N95 mask entries.

If there is a preference for shrouded/unshrouded, they're open to advice. They have had quotes for both valved and unvalved versions but as yet have not had advice regarding if valves are acceptable at all – so open to advice on unvalved, shrouded valves and unshrouded valves.

NR

---

**From:** Van Tam, Jonathan

**Sent:** 04 February 2020 14:02

**To:** [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]

**Subject:** Re: Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

Are these for use in HC settings and by whom and in what clinical scenarios?

Do they mean shrouded or non-shrouded valve Or does this not even figure in their considerations?

---

**From:** [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]

**Sent:** Tuesday, February 4, 2020 1:51 pm

**To:** Van Tam, Jonathan

**Cc:** WN-CoVspoc; [Name Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

Sorry – too many email chains today!

They have asked:

*According to the WHO Disease Commodity Package ([link](#)) it recommends N95/FFP2 particulate respirators or higher. It doesn't, however, mention whether these should be valved or non-valved. Are you able to offer any advice on whether we should be sourcing valved or non-valved respirators for this response?*

Thanks,

NR

---

**From:** Van Tam, Jonathan

**Sent:** 04 February 2020 13:28

**To:** [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]

**Cc:** WN-CoVspoc <[WN-CoVspoc@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:WN-CoVspoc@dhsc.gov.uk)>; [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]

**Subject:** RE: Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

We need to know the question.

---

**From:** [Name Redacted]

**Sent:** 04 February 2020 12:47

**To:** Van Tam, Jonathan <[Jonathan.VanTam@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Jonathan.VanTam@dhsc.gov.uk)>

**Cc:** WN-CoVspoc <[WN-CoVspoc@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:WN-CoVspoc@dhsc.gov.uk)>; [Name Redacted] [Name Redacted]

**Subject:** FW: Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

**Importance:** High

Hi JVT,

We've received the query below from DFID.

[Name Redacted] advises that we have just sought advice on valved v un-valved FFP3 respirators for pandemic influenza from NERVTAG. Is this something we need to go back to NERVTAG on?

Alternatively, should we pass to PHE or are you able to advise?

Lastly, if this is mainly an issue of tolerability for the staff member wearing the mask is the recent advice received from NERVTAG on influenza stockpiles relevant?

Kind regards,

NR



[Name Redacted]

Wuhan Coronavirus Incident Team  
Department of Health and Social Care  
39 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0EU

E: [Name Redacted]

T: [I&S]

Follow us on Twitter @DHSCgovuk

---

**From:** Name Redacted

**Sent:** 04 February 2020 12:37

**To:** Name Redacted; Name Redacted; Name Redacted; Name Redacted

**Cc:** NR <DFID.gov.uk>; NR <@dfid.gov.uk>

**Subject:** Urgent - question on technical specifications for procuring respirators

**Importance:** High

Hi NR

Not sure if you're in the crisis centre but I couldn't see anyone at the DHSC desk. My logistics colleagues (in copy) are procuring some respirators and have a technical question about valve specifications. Would you be able to link them up with someone in DHSC who can advise on this please? We've tried the SPOC but not had a response yet.

Many thanks,

NR

Crisis Centre Liaison Officer, DFID Coronavirus Response Team

I&S E: Name Redacted

---

UK aid is helping the world's poorest people change their lives. {MX01}

Follow us online: <http://www.gov.uk/dfid> Twitter: @DFID\_UK

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Any views expressed in this message are not necessarily those of the Department of Health and Social Care. Please note: Incoming and outgoing email messages are routinely monitored for compliance with our policy on the use of electronic communications.

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Any views expressed in this message are not necessarily those of the Department of Health and Social Care. Please note: Incoming and outgoing email messages are routinely monitored for compliance with our policy on the use of electronic communications.

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Any views expressed in this message are not necessarily those of the Department of Health and Social Care. Please note: Incoming and outgoing email messages are routinely monitored for compliance with our policy on the use of electronic communications.

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Any views expressed in this message are not necessarily those of the Department of Health and Social Care. Please note: Incoming and outgoing email messages are routinely monitored for compliance with our policy on the use of electronic communications.

This e-mail and any attachments is intended only for the attention of the addressee(s). Its unauthorised use, disclosure, storage or copying is not permitted. If you are not the intended recipient, please destroy all copies and inform the sender by return e-mail. Any views expressed in this message are not necessarily those of the Department of Health and Social Care. Please note: Incoming and outgoing email messages are routinely monitored for compliance with our policy on the use of electronic communications.