



Joint Guidance for the Florida Fire Service List of varying levels of Respiratory Protection from COVID-19

The FFCA and FFP recommend that ALL decisions regarding PPE usage be made in consultation with your agency's Medical Director, Infection Control Officer, and the most recent [CDC guidance](#) for Healthcare Professionals. This Joint Guidance has been created to educate the Fire Service on common respiratory protection devices that can be used as PPE becomes scarce.

Additional considerations:

- PPE availability, sustainability and reusability
- Mobility of the responder
- Decontamination procedures
- Visibility limitations
- Procedures being performed
- Work environment (indoors, outdoors, temperature, during transport, etc)
- Authenticity of products (counterfeit masks have been discovered in FL)

Respiratory protection levels in descending order of protection

1. **Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)**
2. **Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR)**
3. **SCBA Mask with P100 filter cartridge**
4. **SCBA Mask with N95 filter cartridge**
5. **P100 Respirator**
6. **N95 Respirator**
7. **Surgical mask as certified by the FDA** (Acceptable for source control on the patient and provides some protection to wearer)

There are international alternatives that [CDC lists as comparable in filtering capability to an N95 mask](#) such as **FFP2, FFP3, KN95**. These designations are for filtering ability, not necessarily an indication of the tight fit necessary to be used as a "respirator". International alternatives should be authenticated in accordance with the [FDA Emergency Use Authorization](#) issued on 4/3/2020. Some of these may offer filtering levels superior to the surgical mask but there are fraudulent products on the market and you are relying on foreign certification systems.

Mask vs Respirator

Surgical Mask: Fluid resistant and provides the wearer protection against large droplets, splashes, or sprays of bodily or other hazardous fluids. Protects the patient from the wearer's respiratory emissions.

N95 Respirator: Reduces wearer's exposure to particles including small particle aerosols and large droplets (only non-oil aerosols)

(Note: Some N95 Respirators are also Surgical Masks and can provide the protection of both devices)