



PRESS RELEASE

Brussels – 17 JUNE 2020

CEN PUBLISHES A FREE WORKSHOP AGREEMENT ON COMMUNITY FACE COVERINGS

In light of the evolving situation of the coronavirus outbreak in Europe, CEN, the European Committee for Standardization, after the urgent request from the European Commission, developed a new CEN Workshop Agreement on community face coverings, which is made available for free today.

The new [CWA 17553:2020 'Community face coverings - Guide to minimum requirements, methods of testing and use'](#) provides the minimum requirements for the design, production and performance assessment of community face coverings (barrier masks) intended for consumers, single or reusable. It is available for free download from the CEN and CENELEC website and from the websites of [CEN national members](#). *

In most European countries, community masks, which often are not included in the scope of the personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical devices regulations, have become a fundamental element of national strategies guiding the gradual lifting of the confinement measures in place. For this reason, the European Commission has identified the urgent need for a harmonised and consistent degree of safety in community face coverings.

Based on this need and to respond to the urgency of the situation, CEN agreed to develop this CWA with a fast-track approach under the stewardship of [AFNOR](#), the French Standardization Body. The CWA published on 17 June is the fruit of a collective effort by the members of this Workshop, who have shared their expertise, together with already existing national guidelines, to develop a shared deliverable for free download.

This exceptional decision reflects CEN and its members' commitment and determination to continue supporting the necessary efforts in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, and it follows the decision to make freely available a list of [11 European standards \(ENs\) for medical devices and personal protective equipment used in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Elena Santiago Cid, CEN and CENELEC's Director General, commented: "Our continuous objective is to limit the fragmentation in the Single Market, and this new CWA is further testimony of how European standardization creates trust for European consumers and facilitate intra-EU trade."

** We invite you to check local legislation requirements with your national authorities and guidance documents that may have been made available by standardization organisations in your country.*

CEN

CEN (European Committee for Standardization) is recognised by the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) as one of the European Standardization Organizations responsible for developing standards at European level. These standards set out specifications and procedures in relation to a wide range of materials, processes, products and services.

The members of CEN are the National Standardization Bodies of 34 European countries. European Standards (ENs) and other standardization deliverables adopted by CEN are accepted and recognised in all of these countries.

European Standards (ENs) contribute to enhancing safety, improving quality, facilitating cross-border trade and strengthening the European Single Market. They are developed through a process of collaboration among experts nominated by business and industry, research institutes, consumer and environmental organizations, trade unions and other stakeholders. CEN works to promote the international alignment of standards in the framework of technical cooperation agreements with ISO (International Organization for Standardization).

CEN website: www.cen.eu

CEN-CENELEC website: www.cencenelec.eu

Media contact:

Giovanni Collot

Project Manager Strategy & Governance

CEN-CENELEC Management Centre

T: +32 474 98 21 17

Email: gcollot@cencenelec.eu

Twitter: [@Standards4EU](https://twitter.com/Standards4EU)