

TÜV RHEINLAND

TESTING CORONA PROTECTION MATERIALS AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY PROJECTS



Since the outbreak of the global corona pandemic, the production and trade of suitable protective materials such as respiratory masks have become a high-risk area for all those involved.

"The quality and safety of the protective materials on offer is currently not only subject to considerable fluctuations, but more and more frequently goods are coming from dubious sources, are highly questionable in terms of hygiene, and in some cases completely unusable", explains Dipl.-Ing. Ralf Scheller, member of the Board of Management of TÜV Rheinland AG. "We are in direct contact with governments, ministries, local authorities and companies in the health sector worldwide and are increasingly experiencing cases and incidents in which supply chains simply collapse and overpriced goods do not arrive.



In some cases, criminal activity is behind this, for example when certificates are forged or goods are sold several times. This is why the experts in personal protective equipment (PPE) at TÜV Rheinland are increasingly being called in for on-site assignments in the manufacturing countries. They test the protective materials in their worldwide network of laboratories directly on site, check documents or monitor the transportation of goods from the manufacturer to the customer.



Support and assistance for multinational aid projects

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been supporting many multinational aid projects and are involved ourselves even in the Heinsberg district, where we have donated 9,000 FFP3 protective masks for the intensive medical care sector," explains Scheller. "Our colleagues in China have also recently supported a relief shipment of several million protective masks, protective clothing and gloves as well as many respirators through quality assurance measures in the supply chain, which was sent to the UK by a private donor".

When it comes to personal protective equipment, TÜV Rheinland's focus is on safety and quality. This makes it all the more important that safety clothing meets the relevant requirements so that its protective function can be guaranteed.

"Our experts carry out all relevant tests and certifications on personal protective equipment in accordance with PPE Regulation 2016/425. Thanks to many years of active committee work in the field of PPE, we are close to the market and have extensive know-how," knows Dr.-Ing. Kristina Fuhrmann, Head of the Textiles and PPE Department at TÜV Rheinland. "The specialist expertise we have gained in this way flows into our daily work and is reflected in our comprehensive services". For example, so-called "community masks" are subjected to numerous chemical and physical tests according to our own test specifications (2PFG S 0193/04.20) and can also be provided with a TÜV Rheinland test mark (tested for harmful substances). Community masks are mainly made of textile materials and serve as a barrier. Medical masks and surgical masks, on the other hand, can be tested or inspected by TÜV Rheinland Greater China. "Our services cover many types of protective clothing", says Fuhrmann. Added to this is the large range of medical products, such as respiratory equipment.



TÜV Rheinland also supports occupational safety projects in corona times

Shops, furniture stores and electronic markets are allowed to reopen, businesses are starting up their production as usual - the following applies to all of them: infection protection for employees must meet increased requirements and normal occupational health and safety must continue to be met. The framework for the extended protective measures is

provided by the SARS-CoV-2- occupational safety standard of the Federal Ministry of Labor. Employers are obliged to define and implement suitable measures for their company and to monitor the control. The solutions are as individual as the companies themselves: Whereas in a production plant it is necessary to straighten out shift schedules and minimize employee contact, a sales outlet faces different challenges: For example, how can customer flows be managed to maintain minimum distances? How will customer advisors, cashiers or suppliers be protected?

"Our experts have developed a detailed guideline for the SARS-CoV-2 occupational safety standard of the Federal Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs to advise and support companies in the complex implementation of the strict requirements", explains Dipl.-Ing. Norbert Wieneke, business unit manager for company health management, occupational medicine and occupational safety at TÜV Rheinland. The requirements of the SARS-CoV-2 occupational health and safety standard include personal, organizational and constructional hygiene measures as well as the corresponding instructions. They go hand in hand with, and far beyond, offers of occupational medical and psychological advice for employees and risk groups. It is the employer's responsibility to identify suspected cases of corona among employees and, if an infection is detected, to establish a routine for pandemic preparedness in the company. In order to do justice to this comprehensive task, the expertise of occupational physicians, occupational safety specialists, industrial psychologists and health experts is required. These experts already work successfully together in TÜV Rheinland's interdisciplinary teams and implement cross-sector projects for their customers.



Source: TÜV Rheinland