



# PPE and Other Equipment Procurement Tip Sheet

## IDENTIFYING THE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED OF YOUR ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO REOPEN:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has released comprehensive guidelines for reopening that address the equipment and safety measures your organizations must take to return safely to business.

**You may find general business guidelines at:**

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts#general-business-guidance->

**And sector-specific guidelines at:**

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/reopening-sector-specific-protocols-and-best-practices>

## PURCHASING SUPPLIES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION:

The supply chain for personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitation supplies, and other coronavirus related reopening items has significantly stabilized. However, the process of navigating where to purchase these supplies is not always straightforward, especially for many of the businesses and organizations that have not needed to purchase these types of supplies in the past. With a surge in the need for these products, many vendors have begun making, sourcing, and selling these supplies for the first time. Prices and quality of products can vary, especially when performing a general search online. Some places to begin your search are cited below.

1. [WWW.MASS.GOV](http://WWW.MASS.GOV). The state website provides a list of vetted vendors who are selling reopening supplies in MA. That list can be found here:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-purchasing-hygienic-or-protective-supplies-for-the-workplace>

- a. Scroll down the page until you see:

Company Name	Mass Manufacturer	Diversity Certification	Commercial name	Commercial email	Commercial phone	Company website	Comments
Gerson	Yes	-	-	custserv@gersonco.com	508-947-4000	<a href="http://www.gersonco.com">www.gersonco.com</a>	-
Polymershapes	Yes	-	-	-	info@polymershapes.com	<a href="http://www.polymershapes.com">www.polymershapes.com</a>	-

- b. Click “Select equipment type” and a drop down menu will appear. In this drop down menu, you can select the item you are looking for and the list will update to reflect which vendors have reported they sell this item.

**Reopening Supply Vendors and Manufacturers**

Select a type of equipment from the menu to see contact information for organizations that offer it.

Filter by diversity certification.

Commercial name	Commercial email	Commercial phone	Company website	Comments
-	custserv@gersonco.com	508-947-4000	<a href="http://www.gersonco.com">www.gersonco.com</a>	-
-	-	info@polymershapes.com	<a href="http://www.polymershapes.com">www.polymershapes.com</a>	-
Aaron Wright	Aaron Wright	aaron@solomongroupplc.com	<a href="http://www.solomongroupplc.com">www.solomongroupplc.com</a>	-

## 2. LOCAL BUSINESSES.

You can find reopening items in local stores. Masks, gloves, thermometers, hand sanitizer, and other disinfectants are often available through local pharmacies, office supply stores, and hardware stores. These items may come in limited amounts and, therefore, run out quickly. We recommend you call ahead and ask what these local stores have in stock and what quantities they allow individuals to purchase at once.

During our regional procurement initiative, the FRCOG used the following vendors:

- **WB Mason** and **Staples Advantage** are on the [state approved vendor list](#), have access to a wide market place, and will work to source a wide variety of items from a number of vendors and suppliers.
- **Amazon’s Business COVID19 Marketplace.** Accessing COVID19 supplies through Amazon requires creating a business account and requesting access to a special COVID19 marketplace that is not available to the public. The process of creating a business account and accessing COVID19 supplies is straightforward and explained on their website: <https://business.amazon.com/en/work-with-us/healthcare/covid-19-supplies>.

### TIP: ANTICIPATE SUPPLY CHAIN SHORTAGES AND ALLOCATIONS

*The supply chain has stabilized considerably since the beginning of the pandemic, but you should still expect some types of items to be on backorder or to have orders partially filled. Backordered items can take 2-4 weeks to arrive. Place your orders well in advance and get on the waiting list early.*

*Disposable gloves and N95 masks are two of the harder to find items and are often on allocation. Allocation is a restriction on the amount of certain items one can purchase within a period established by the vendor (often 1 week to 1 month). If you need these items in higher quantities than allocated, place orders through multiple vendors or call local businesses and see what they have on hand.*

## A NOTE ON RESPIRATORS: N95 VERSUS KN95

Respirators are masks that create an airtight seal around the face and mouth and filter out airborne particulates. Disposable, cotton, and homemade facemasks do not create a seal and are not intended to protect a user from the airborne droplets that can spread the coronavirus or from other environmental hazards found when working in certain industries and trades. **Respirators are required in certain health care, manufacturing, and trade settings. Based on the [MA reopening guidelines](#), respirators are not required in most other settings. Refer to the [MA reopening guidelines](#) and [sector specific regulations](#) to see if your business is required to use respirators.** Comply with any company, local, state, and federal guidance in their use.

The difference between an N95 and a KN95 is how they are tested and certified. N95 is a U.S. designation. Masks labeled as N95s are tested and meet U.S. NIOSH standards. KN95 is a Chinese designation. Masks labeled as KN95s are tested and certified in China. Generally, N95s are rated at a higher standard and have been subjected to greater quality control measures than KN95s. Prior to COVID19, KN95s were not an allowable alternative to N95s within the U.S. Due to extreme shortages of N95s, the U.S. has authorized an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for certain brands of KN95. To read more about these EUA's see the FDA's FAQ:

- **FAQs on EUAs for Non-NIOSH Approved Respirators During the COVID-19 Pandemic.**  
<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/faqs-euas-non-niosh-approved-respirators-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- **Personal Protective Equipment EUAs.**  
<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-emergency-use-authorizations-medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-euas#respirators>

NIOSH's National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory has tested a number of Chinese made KN95 respirators<sup>1</sup>. Reference these lab results before purchasing a KN95 respirator; you can find lab testing results online at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/respirators/testing/NonNIOSHresults.html>.

### COUNTERFEIT RESPIRATORS

*Counterfeit N95 respirators are sold online and marketed as if they are legitimate. Ensure that any respirator that claims to be NIOSH approved is legitimate. Validate claims of KN95 respirators that advertise that they are on the FDA's Emergency Use Authorization list and ensure that the KN95 you are purchasing has been certified in China.*

*To find out how to identify legitimate vs. counterfeit respirators please follow CDC guidance:*

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/usernotices/counterfeitResp.html>

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<sup>1</sup> KN95 masks tested by NIOSH are not NIOSH-approved and often fall below the standards of N95 respirators.

If you find you still have question or run into a roadblock, please don't hesitate to contact us for some technical assistance at 413-768-4127 or [FranklinCountyMACC@fcog.org](mailto:FranklinCountyMACC@fcog.org).