

PPE update

Media release

12 June 2020

The Ministry of Health has identified potential concerns around the quality of some of the masks purchased internationally as part of ensuring New Zealand's supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The concerns about the 4.9 million masks relate to inconsistencies in labelling and certification.

New Zealand continues to have sufficient supply of PPE, including masks, which is distributed at a national level.

Due to the pressure on global supply lines in March, PPE was being purchased quickly and often from different sources than those usually used in the health sector as part of the COVID-19 response.

The Ministry has reviewed all PPE orders since the start of the year as part of routine due diligence to ensure quality and authenticity of PPE.

DHBs that have received the masks of potential concern have been asked to put those items on hold while further quality checks are completed.

Putting the masks in circulation on hold is a precautionary move while further quality assurance takes place. It does not mean that these items are non-compliant.

The Ministry is looking to ensure appropriate checks are in place before any of the masks identified are put back into circulation.

The Ministry remains confident in New Zealand's overall supply of PPE, including what is currently held nationally as well as orders currently in flow.

All masks that the Ministry is asking DHBs to hold are able to be restocked via usual DHB ordering processes.

The Ministry's national store and DHB reserves currently hold 50 million masks and another 90 million masks are on order.

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