

Frequently Asked Questions- Fire Escape Hoods

How does the fire escape hood work?

The smoke produced by fires contains harmful toxic gases and fire escape hoods are designed to be pulled over the head and filter these gases to prevent breathing them in.

Can the fire escape hood be worn on people with smaller faces/ children?

The fire escape hoods have to be tight-fitting in order to form a seal around the neck, nose and mouth to prevent ingress from smoke.

Persons with smaller faces may need to press the inner mask over their mouth and nose for a better seal.

If the fire escape hood is to be used on a child, a firefighter will make sure that the inner mask is positioned correctly over their chin and nose.

As part of fitting the fire escape hood, firefighters will carry out tests to ensure that a seal has been achieved. If not suitable for use then alternative methods of rescue and evacuation will be assessed.

Can the fire escape hood be worn by a person with a full beard?

Advice from the manufacturer states that full beards, deep scars and long sideburns can cause leaks and put the wearer of the device at risk.

As part of fitting the hood, firefighters will carry out tests to ensure that a seal has been achieved. If a seal cannot be achieved then alternative methods of rescue and evacuation will be assessed.

Can fire escape hoods be worn over head coverings e.g. hijab, scarf and face coverings?

The fire escape hood is one size and must be a close fit around the neck, nose and mouth. To achieve this, a firefighter may ask you to remove a head covering or any other item that may interfere with the correct fitting of the hood. Cultural and religious sensitivity will be used by crews in this scenario, but the urgency of the situation and the need to evacuate must be taken into account by persons asked to use a fire escape hood.

No attempt to fit a fire escape hood will be undertaken against anyone's wishes. If the fitting of a fire escape hood is not possible or unwanted, alternative methods of rescue and evacuation will be assessed.

The following assurance has been sought from the Muslim, Jewish and Sikh community that in a lifesaving scenario, any items that may interfere with the fitting and operation of the fire escape hood can be removed or adjusted:

Jewish-Policy Officer SCOJEC *"The Jewish community very much welcomes any development that may assist in saving lives. Indeed, the requirement to save life is central to Jewish belief - Jewish religious law states that "one who saves a single life is regarded as if he had saved the whole world", and almost all other religious obligations must (not "may") be set aside in order to do so. So we would not anticipate any objections to the use or format of the fire escape hoods."*

- **Muslim Council of Scotland**

"On the head/ face coverings, if required to be removed, some women would find that very traumatic. However, Islam is a very practical religion, which would prioritise the saving of life and reduction of injury over the dress code. However, not every Muslim is fully aware of that so this is a point that is worth being aware of."

What if I have anxiety or a panic attack?

Fire escape hoods are used to save lives and support evacuation and will only be deployed if necessary.

Firefighters will treat members of the public sensitively, give reassurance and explain the process of fitting a fire escape hood.

If a member of the public is showing signs of anxiety whilst fitting a fire escape hood, fire crews will confirm they are happy to proceed.

Firefighters will carry out tests to ensure that a seal has been achieved, which involves placing a hand over the filter inlet and the wearer breathing in to check that a vacuum is created.

No attempt to fit a fire escape hood will be undertaken against anyone's wishes. If the fitting of a fire escape hood is unwanted or not suitable, alternative methods of rescue and evacuation will be assessed.

What if I can't or don't want to wear a fire escape hood?

Firefighters are trained to make an assessment on the safest and most effective method of rescue or evacuation to use in given situations.

No attempt to fit a fire escape hood will be undertaken against anyone's wishes. If the fitting of a fire escape hood is not possible or unwanted, alternative methods of rescue and evacuation will be assessed.

Can I use the fire escape hood if I have a physical disability or impairment e.g. reduced hand/ arm movement?

Firefighters will give assistance to put on the fire escape hoods if needed.

Can I use the fire escape hood if I am visually impaired?

Firefighters will explain to the wearer how the fire escape hood is fitted and where appropriate will give assistance to members of the public to put it on.

Firefighters are trained to guide members of the public to a place of safety.

Can I use the fire escape hood if I can't hear or understand what the firefighters are telling me?

There are instructional pictures on the fire escape hood packaging which can be used to assist firefighter's communications with members of the public.

Firefighters will explain to the wearer how the fire escape hood is fitted, however, because they will be wearing breathing apparatus equipment this may be difficult to hear clearly and will prevent lip reading, so the pictures will be used to show what to do if needed.

Firefighters will give assistance to put on the fire escape hoods where appropriate.

Firefighters will guide the wearer safely out of the building or they will stay with the wearer until a safe exit route is established.

