

## **The Valencian textile industry collaborates with the government to manufacture masks and protective equipment**

Since the beginning of health crisis of 19, Ateval has establish contact with National and Regional governments gathering information from companies about stocks and produccion capacity, to develop a project that allows the manufacture of surgical masks on a large scale in companies of the Valencian Community.

This initiative has the collaboration of the Valencian Institute of Business Competitiveness, (Ivace), the Association of Textile Entrepreneurs of the Valencian Community, (Ateval), and the Textile Technology Institute Aitex. The technological centre foresees the manufacture of approximately six million surgical masks, with a production of 25,000 units per day per company.

In this project, the Regional Ministry of Economy has combined Aitex's experience in innovation and laboratories with Ateval's business reference and knowledge of the textile sector.

Recently, Aitex has obtained the approval of the fabrics and materials so that Valencian companies that have offered to manufacture masks due to the health crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic can do it.

The tests carried out by Aitex on the material of the masks have focused on three parameters: in vitro determination of the effectiveness of bacterial filtration (BFE), breathability (differential pressure) and the pressure of resistance to splashing.

Ateval is collaborating in the manufacture of masks by providing and facilitating companies that acomplysh with certain hygienic conditions (it is necessary for textile companies to have a clean room for manufacture).

It should be noted that not just any company can make medical equipment, as to do so they need a Prior Operating License granted by the Spanish Agency of Medicines and Healthcare Products (AEMPS), in accordance with Royal Decree 1591/2009, of 16 October.

In this large-scale manufacturing project, two companies from the Valencia Region based in Cocentina and Ontinyent have produced the fabric for the surgical masks, due to diffculties to import from third countries.

At present, five Ateval associated companies from Agullent, Bocairent, Torrent, Vilafranca and Ontinyent, are manufacturing the masks adaptating their machinery and production processes to the current situation, this number can be increased in the following days.