

Fake Websites Selling Coronavirus Masks Are Scamming Organizations out of Millions

San Francisco, 23 March 2020: The Coronavirus pandemic has given rise to a cottage industry of scam artists looking to prey on people's fears.

An investigation by Escrow.com, the world's most secure payment method from a counterparty risk perspective, has found a surge of unscrupulous websites aimed at selling N95 respirator masks in the midst of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Fake websites with no history are being put online, seemingly selling bulk quantities of Coronavirus masks. Without any legitimate business history or record to speak of, they are offering low prices on orders for millions of masks.



One company, operating under the domain name www.3mspain.org, offered to sell 1 million 3M N95 face masks. In emails obtained by Escrow.com, the company's representative, calling himself Dr. Heredia Jose, quoted a price of €750,000

(USD\$827,262) for 1 million 3M N95 face masks, and even provided video of the boxes of masks.

Dear sir.

As requested on skype, here are the following quotations

3M N95 Surgical Mask 1860

15,00€ per box (20 pcs) | 27,00€ per box (50 pcs)

15,00€ per box

1 box for 20 pieces(20 pcs) |

1,000,000 pieces will be

50,000 boxes which is 750,000 €

Ear Loop Surgical Mask

3M Procedure Mask 1820..... 10,00€ per box (50 pcs)

1 million pieces is

20,000 boxes

1 box is 10 €

20,000 boxes is 200,000 €

1 million pieces of 1860 is 750,000 €

1 million pieces of 1820 is 200,000 €

Regards

Dr PHD Heredia Jose

3M Health Care

Infection Prevention Division

[image: 3m.jpg]

Email correspondence obtained by Escrow.com

When asked to provide company registration numbers, telephone numbers and office addresses, the company's representative provided legitimate information pertaining to 3M's headquarters in Madrid, but the company's site has never been affiliated with 3M, which runs its Spanish site under the domain www.3m.com.es.

Dear Carlos,

Our Company professional supplier of cleanroom and medical disposable products. Non-woven face mask, non-woven garments, bouffant caps, shoe covers, aprons, work suits, Non Touch thermometers etc. We are always devoted to providing more competitive cleanroom & medical products and services for our customers. Our products are exported to the China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, USA, European countries, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and South America, etc. We can process products according to the requirements as well as samples from our clients. We take the advantages of high quality products and services, competitive price, good location and human resource, to hope to cooperate with you and be your reliable partner in the future. I am glad for your interest to purchase a high number of disposable surgical masks and N95 masks. I will be glad to confirm that us at 3M Health Care from **3M Spain S. L.** we are able to supply you and make loading and delivery by air as early as possible

Email correspondence obtained by Escrow.com

The company, representing itself as 3M Health Care Infection Prevention Division, only registered its domain on 14 February 2020. A search on the Internet Archive found no pages for the site. And in the emails provided to Escrow.com, a representative for the company declined requests to inspect the products in person, saying the products could only be viewed after purchase. The representative also initially claimed to be a 3M manufacturer, but later claimed to be an official reseller.

In [videos obtained by Escrow.com](#), the company shows the product to the potential customer, but doesn't provide a clear view of the face masks to verify that they're official NIOSH-approved N95 masks.

The 3mspain.org site has since been taken down.

Another site, which is still in operation, claims to be one of the world's leading manufacturers of NIOSH approved N95 face masks. But Escrow.com's investigation revealed the company's domain was only registered on 13 February 2020.

Moreover, a look into the business activities of the Swedish company listed on the site found them listed as performing installation and maintenance services for machinery and industrial equipment. And in spite of claiming to be a world-leading supplier of face masks, the company did around USD\$160,000 in revenue last year according to the Swedish Companies office (Bolagsverket).

Perhaps most damning, none of the company's various trading names are listed under the Center for Disease Control's registry of NIOSH-approved mask manufacturers.

The company became aware of these sites as transaction volume for personal protective equipment on Escrow.com surged in February and March.

"Transaction setup volume for masks and medical protective equipment has increased over 5000% since January," Escrow.com General Manager Jackson Elsegood said. "Many of these transactions will be with reputable dealers, however there are also those that seek to take advantage of unwary buyers. "Without proper precautions, the goods you receive may not match what you paid for. Or, worse yet, you might not receive the goods at all."

Escrow.com offers a safe way for buyers and sellers of supply chain transactions to deal with new suppliers by holding funds until the buyer receives the goods that they paid for. Additionally, Escrow.com supports multiple brokers in a transaction receiving commissions for arranging transactions. As a licensed and regulated online escrow



service, Escrow.com's platform is available 24x7 to keep buyers and sellers protected while giving them flexibility needed to keep their supply chain moving.

About Escrow.com

Winner of the BBB Torch Award for Ethics for Silicon Valley, San Francisco and the Bay Area, Escrow.com is the leading provider of secure online payments and online transaction management for consumers and businesses on the Internet, having safely processed over US\$4 billion in transactions. Founded by Fidelity in 1999, Escrow.com reduces the risk of fraud by acting as a trusted third party that collects, holds and disburses funds according to buyer and seller instructions.

Escrow.com is a subsidiary of twelve-time Webby Award winning Freelancer.com, the world's largest freelancing and crowdsourcing marketplace by number of users and jobs posted. Freelancer Limited is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange under the ticker ASX:FLN

How Escrow.com Works for Supply Chains:

1. **Buyer, Seller, and Broker agree to terms** - The Broker begins a transaction by entering the Buyer and Seller's contact information. After registering at Escrow.com, all parties agree to the terms of the transaction.
2. **Buyer pays Escrow.com** - Escrow.com collects funds from the Buyer and Broker and Seller are notified that funds have been secured.
3. **Seller sends the merchandise to Buyer** - Seller ships the agreed merchandise and Escrow.com tracks the delivery.
4. **Buyer accepts merchandise** - The Buyer inspects the merchandise and has the option to accept or reject it.
5. **Escrow.com pays Broker and Seller** - Escrow.com releases the funds to the Seller.

Ends



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