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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Requirements for Health Professionals

As per the Ministry of Health's mask policy effective November 4, 2020, all healthcare workers and non-clinical staff must wear a medical mask at all times in healthcare facilities and settings where healthcare is provided, including in common areas and break rooms unless eating and/or drinking.

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/Mask_Use_Health_Care_Facilities.pdf

In addition to Routine Practices and performing a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) at every healthcare encounter, all health professionals are required to follow Contact and Droplet Precautions when within 2 meters of a symptomatic client. (See Table 1 below).

The PPE for this level of precaution includes:
- Gown
- Gloves
- Procedure mask
- Eye protection (face shield or goggles)

All health professionals should don a procedure mask and eye protection when within 2m of an asymptomatic client. (See Table 1 below).

There are no evidence-based guidelines supporting the use of hair and shoe coverings in clinical settings caring for COVID-19 patients/clients/residents. In accordance with your Workplace Health policies, you may choose to have a separate pair of shoes at work and utilize disinfecting wipes as needed. Adding your own additional pieces of PPE beyond those recommended may result in harm by increasing risk of self-contamination during the doffing process.

Follow appropriate donning and doffing guidelines. Please find BCCDC posters for donning and doffing at these links:
http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/infection-control/personal-protective-equipment

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_AdditionalPPEPoster.pdf

Use N95 respirators in addition to Contact and Droplet Precautions when performing Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs). All health care workers require fit-testing for an N95 respirator. When using a new model, fit testing is required. If the use of an N95 Respirator is not suitable, an Elastomeric Half Face-piece Respirator (EHFR) may be substituted, however a fit test is required prior to use.

As of March 6, 2020, the BC Ministry of Health has made the following recommendations:
- Effective immediately, health authorities facing an imminent shortage of N95 respirators shall allow workers who have had their respirator fit test within the previous 2 years to continue to use respirators without additional testing.
- Effective immediately, health authorities facing an imminent shortage of N95 respirators shall ensure these same workers perform a fit check or seal check prior to the use of the respirator, and where that check reveals an issue with the seal, a full fit test will be performed*

*If health care workers have had any significant changes in their facial structure, it is recommended that they undergo a full fit test.

COVID-19 Requirements for PPE

There has been a rapid increase in community spread of COVID-19 within Canada and there is evidence that transmission may occur from those who have few or no symptoms. As a result, in addition to standard

Long-Term Care/Seniors Assisted Living Settings

Health care workers and non-clinical staff:
- All persons working in a Long-Term Care facility or Seniors Assisted Living residence must wear a medical mask at all times, including in common areas and break rooms unless eating and/or drinking.

Other Health Care Facilities and Settings where Health Care is Provided

Health care workers and non-clinical staff:
- All persons working in a clinical unit/setting/patient care area must wear a medical mask, including in common areas and break rooms unless eating and/or drinking.
- All persons working in non-clinical settings must follow guidance for mask use in accordance with their workplace COVID-19 Safety Plan(s) required by WorkSafe BC.

The rationale for full-shift masking of staff is to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 infection from staff to clients at a time when no symptoms of illness are recognized, but the virus can be transmitted. The rationale for staff to wear full-shift eye protection is to include an extra precautionary measure so that mucus membranes are protected from accidental exposure to uncovered coughs and sneezes.

Indications for Contact and Droplet and Airborne precautions are listed in Table 1 below. This document does not replace clinical judgement. All staff should be encouraged to still conduct a Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) to determine whether the proposed PPE is appropriate to protect from any blood or body fluid exposure related to the task they will be performing.
## Table 1: PPE Recommendations for Health Professionals

All patients **must** wear a medical mask when entering and moving around a health care facility, including patient transport, except when requested to remove their mask by a health care professional. All visitors **must** wear a medical mask when entering and moving around any health care facility, including clinical and non-clinical areas. Exceptions to the Policy may need to be applied for people with certain medical conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>When client is symptomatic (and within 2m of client)</th>
<th>When client is asymptomatic (and within 2m of client)</th>
<th>What does the client need to wear if they are symptomatic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHN</td>
<td>Immunizations</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Procedure mask, eye protection, and gloves* See here for more information.</td>
<td>Re-schedule appointment until symptoms resolved. Provide procedure mask.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinic Visits</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Procedure mask, eye protection, and gloves*</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specimen Collection</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs)</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions with N95 respirator</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions with N95 respirator</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screening (without client contact)</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Procedure mask, eye protection</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Testing</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions with N95 respirator</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions with N95 respirator</td>
<td>Cover face with protective, breathable barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHN/HCCN/HCA</td>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Procedure mask, eye protection, and gloves*</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Procedure mask and eye protection Use PPE as per workplace health policies***</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any encounter with client</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions</td>
<td>Procedure mask, eye protection, and gloves*</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Responders</td>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions with N95 respirator</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions with N95 respirator</td>
<td>Cover face with protective, breathable barrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Transport</td>
<td>Driving</td>
<td>Procedure mask** If Driver is in direct contact with client, don full PPE for Contact and Droplet precautions.</td>
<td>Procedure mask**</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask. Recommend seating client at least 2m from driver if possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Precautions</td>
<td>PPE Requirements</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial Staff</td>
<td>Cleaning within 2m of client</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions. Please see this link for considerations when cleaning after an AGMP. Use PPE as per workplace health policies***</td>
<td>Use PPE as per workplace health policies***</td>
<td>Facility should provide procedure mask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Terminal clean</td>
<td>Contact and Droplet precautions. Please see this link for considerations when cleaning after an AGMP. Use PPE as per workplace health policies***</td>
<td>Use PPE as per workplace health policies***</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>Staff may be protected by transparent barriers that will allow for communication between them and patients or other persons who present for screening. Maintain 2 metre distancing if a transparent barrier is not in place. Must also wear a procedure mask.</td>
<td>Provide procedure mask</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Gloves are indicated when in direct contact with clients based on exposure risk to infectious agents from tasks being performed. Gloves are single-use and do not replace the need for hand hygiene before and after direct contact with clients and/or their immediate environment.

**Don mask appropriately to avoid vision impairment. Contact Workplace Health if mask causes vision impairment to discuss alternatives.

***e.g. Nitrile/Heavy Duty Gloves; Disposable eye protection; Eye protection (if risk of splash from contaminated material or chemicals); Apron if risk of splash; Boots or closed work shoes

Please note: If a client is asked to don a procedure mask, ensure instructions are available for appropriate donning. Please see: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf)

Please note, procedure and surgical masks are medical grade masks. These terms may be used interchangeably.
Conservation Measures for Personal Protective Equipment

**Purpose**
This document provides a multi-faceted approach to keep health care professionals and community members safe while conserving Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Conserving individual pieces of PPE is part of a larger process of re-aligning care delivery to promote client and staff safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Situation**
Currently, there is a global shortage of PPE and all health authorities in British Columbia are required to implement appropriate and safe conservation measures. It is important that all health care professionals work together to conserve our PPE. For additional information, please see BC Ministry of Health Bulletin #2. The link can be found at: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_PPEBulletin2.pdf

**Assessment**
Some PPE is less likely, if used properly, to come into direct contact with clients and surfaces, though it may be exposed to respiratory droplets during use. For this reason, procedure mask or N95 respirators are appropriate for extended use and disposable goggles/face shields may be appropriate for limited re-use, in line with the guidance below.

**Recommendation**
1. The following strategies will help conserve PPE supplies during the COVID-19 Pandemic by reducing the need for PPE.
   - Community wide physical distancing and supporting safe separation for those self-isolating
   - Reviewing programs and supporting Community Leadership to determine which programs are urgent and should continue at this time. Assessing which urgent services can safely be delivered remotely (i.e. by phone, tele-health). Only providing home visits if essential.
   - Encouraging scheduled appointments where a [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) can be completed prior to the appointment. Delaying non-urgent care for symptomatic clients.
   - Implementing mechanical changes to protect staff and clients. (i.e. indicate acceptable physical distancing if lining up is required and consider physical separator at reception area)
   - Clients with respiratory symptoms must be kept separate from asymptomatic clients whenever possible. Consider setting up triage areas of care outside of usual care delivery areas and designate healthcare professional specific to that area.
   - Ensure appropriate environmental and equipment cleaning practices.

2. The following general principles will help conserve PPE supplies during the COVID-19 Pandemic when use of PPE is indicated. Please use these in conjunction with Table 2.
   - Ensure appropriate and rational use of PPE at all times based on the Point of Care Risk Assessment. Health care professionals need to follow Contact and Droplet Precautions to be protected from this coronavirus.
   - PPE that is used in client care is considered contaminated and should be treated as such. If you touch or adjust your mask, respirator, or eye protection, perform hand hygiene.
   - Follow appropriate doffing procedures and routine precautions when removing PPE to avoid self-contamination from the contaminated equipment.
   - Use a formal and centralized process for PPE storage, management, and distribution. Secure PPE inventory.
Table 2: Guidance on Extended Use and Limited Re-use of Personal Protective Equipment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PPE</th>
<th>Extended Use</th>
<th>Limited Re-use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Procedure Mask</td>
<td>Wear the same mask (without removal) throughout workflow and between clients without touching the mask. Change the mask only if it is too damp, soiled or damaged for safe use, and/or if your shift includes a meal break. Any time that a mask is doffed, a new procedure mask must be donned for the next healthcare encounter to prevent contamination of the health professional.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N95 respirators</td>
<td>Only to be used for AGMPs. Can be used beyond manufacturer's stated expiry date** Change the N95 respirator only if it is too damp, soiled or damaged for safe use, and/or if your shift includes a meal break.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Protection</td>
<td>Wear the same eye protection throughout your workflow and between clients without touching the eye protector.</td>
<td>Yes. Please refer to BCCDC Cleaning and Disinfection Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloves</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation Gowns</td>
<td>If extended use of gown is required. Change the gown when there is a risk of cross contamination between clients. Also change the gown when it is too damp, soiled or damaged for safe use, and/or if your shift includes a meal break.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N95 for AGMP

Questions?

- For health care questions or questions about Communicable Disease Emergency Response Planning, please email cdmgmt@fnha.ca
- For general questions about COVID-19, please email covid19@fnha.ca
- For information about ordering Personal Protective Equipment or other supply and funding related questions, please email covid19needs@fnha.ca.
- For questions about work related safety precautions, please email OHN.clinic@fnha.ca.
- For Infection Prevention and Control related queries, please contact IPC@fnha.ca.