

Berkshire Health System Person Protective Equipment (PPE) Standards

Based on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health “Comprehensive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidance” published on 7/6/2020

Definitions:

1. Health Care Provider (HCP):

HCP refers to all paid and unpaid persons serving in healthcare setting who have the potential for direct or indirect exposures to patients or infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies, devices, and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces or contaminated air.

2. Facemasks:

Surgical or procedure masks protecting both the mouth and the nose against infectious materials. Homemade and cloth facemasks are not considered PPE for staff.

3. N95 respirators:

A filtering facepiece respirator that is approved by BHS as effective protection against infection.

4. Eye Protection:

Disposable or reusable eye protection including goggles, plastic face shields and safety glasses (trauma glasses) that include extensions to cover the side of the eyes.

5. Isolation gowns:

Isolation gowns can be disposable or reusable.

6. Gloves: Single use. Hand hygiene must be preformed before donning and after doffing gloves.

PPE Guidelines for HCPs:

A. Universal face mask use for all staff.

- a) **All staff are required to wear face masks at all times.** Both mouth and nose must always to be covered. This prevents pre-symptomatic spread of COVID-19 by staff to un-infected patients and colleagues as well as reducing transmission to un-infected

staff from pre-symptomatic and undiagnosed colleagues and patients.

- b) Staff should leave the clinical area if they need to remove their mask.
- c) Face masks should be removed and discarded if soiled or damaged.
- d) Staff must take care not to touch the outside of their facemask. If they touch or adjust their face mask, they must immediately perform hand hygiene.
- e) When facemasks are stored for reuse, they should be carefully folded so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage. The folded facemask can be stored between uses in a clean paper bag or breathable container.
- f) Homemade or cloth facemask are not considered PPE.

B. N95 respirators:

N95 respirators or Powered Air Purifying Respirator (PAPR) should be worn for **all aerosol generating procedures (AGPs)**.

C. Universal Use of Eye Protection:

- a) **Staff are required to wear eye protection at all times in clinical areas.**
- b) **Eye protection includes:**
 - a. **Goggles**
 - b. **Face shield**
 - c. **Trauma glasses with side protection**
- c) Corrective glasses and reading glasses do not provide enough coverage to qualify as eye protection
- d) Eye protection may be used for extended use.
- e) Extended use of eye protection is the practice of wearing the same eye protection for repeated close encounters with several different patients, without removing eye protection between patient encounters.

- f) Extended use can be applied to disposable and reusable eye protection.
- g) Eye protection should be removed and reprocessed if it becomes visibly soiled or difficult to see through.
- h) Eye protection should be discarded if it becomes damaged (e.g., face shield can no longer fasten securely, or visibility is obscured and cannot be restored with reprocessing).
- i) Goggles or reusable face shields need appropriate cleaning and disinfection between uses according to manufacturer's instructions.
- j) If a disposable face shield is reprocessed, it should be dedicated to one HCP and reprocessed whenever it is visibly soiled or removed (e.g., when leaving the isolation area) prior to putting it back on.
- k) Staff should not touch their eye protection. If they touch or adjust their eye protection hand hygiene must be performed immediately.
- l) Staff should leave the clinical care area if they need to remove their eye protection.

D. Isolation Gowns

- a) Reusable (i.e., washable) gowns made of polyester or polyester-cotton fabrics can be safely laundered according to routine procedures and reused.
- b) Reusable gowns should be discarded when thin or ripped.
- c) Reusable patient gowns and lab coats can be safely laundered according to routine procedures.
- d) Any gown that becomes visibly soiled during patient care should be disposed of and cleaned.

E. Gloves:

- a) Staff should perform hand hygiene prior to donning and after doffing gloves.
- b) All PPE gloves are single use.