

Guidance on the Use of Personal Protective Equipment Peel's Emergency Shelter and COVID-19 Homeless Response System

Purpose

This document outlines a summary of recommendations for the use of personal protective equipment in homelessness service provider settings to protect the safety and well-being of both staff and clients. The recommendations were informed by Peel Public Health and the Ministry of Health. This document provides basic information only and should be used in conjunction with Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations](#).

Background

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. COVID-19 is a new type of coronavirus that can cause acute respiratory illness with symptoms that range from mild to severe and commonly include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Based on the available evidence, COVID-19 is transmitted between people through close contact and droplets and not airborne.

Knowledge about COVID-19 is evolving. As a result, this guidance document will be updated as new information and/or recommendations become available.

For more information on COVID-19 and the Region of Peel's response, please refer to the [Peel Public Health](#) and/or [Peel Housing Services](#) websites.

Key Findings

1. Personal protective equipment is recommended when providing direct care or service within 2m of clients. The items that may be required include:
 - Facial protection such as surgical masks and N95 respirators,
 - Eye protection such as safety glasses, face shields or masks with visor attachments,
 - Gloves, and/or
 - Isolation gowns.
2. In the Regular Emergency Shelter Program, non-medical masks (e.g., homemade) must be worn by shelter staff when onsite for the duration of their shift and accessible for clients who cannot maintain physical distancing or who request one.
3. In the Isolation and Recovery programs, medical masks (e.g., surgical masks) must be worn by all staff (shelter, medical, cleaning, security) when onsite for the duration of their shift.

Housing Services

Recommendations for the Use of Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) consists of facial protection, eye protection, gloves and masks that can be used to provide a barrier to help prevent potential exposure to infectious disease. While PPE is the most visible form of protection, it is only one effective measure within a package of prevention and mitigation controls. As such, it is imperative that PPE is used within the appropriate settings following proper procedures.

Regular Emergency Shelter Program (Asymptomatic Clients, Not Suspected COVID-19)			
Role	Activities	Guidance/Recommendation	Source
Shelter staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intake assessments, providing support services, meal drop-offs, responding to emergency situations, etc. <p>Note: Regular duties have been modified in response to the pandemic and are outlined in the COVID-19 Guidance for Homelessness Service Providers and Site-Specific Protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-medical masks required when onsite for the duration of the shift Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, limit face-to-face interactions, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands <p>Potential exposure: PPE is required when staff must provide direct service within 2m of a client suspected of having COVID-19.</p> <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, Gown. 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>

Housing Services

<p>Cleaning staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning communal spaces, high-touch surfaces and client rooms after discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-medical masks required when onsite for the duration of the shift • PPE required as per regular cleaning protocols and the Risk Assessment when cleaning common areas and client rooms • PPE must be removed immediately after the cleaning activity is completed or upon exiting a client's room <p>Potential exposure: If a client develops signs and symptoms of COVID-19, their room may be contaminated.</p> <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gown, - Gloves, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room of symptomatic client should be cleaned after discharge (e.g., when the client is no longer in the room) to limit close contact. 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>
<p>Clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating, sleeping, accessing supports onsite, interacting with other clients, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-medical masks should be accessible when physical distancing cannot be maintained or the client requests one 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for</p>

Housing Services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to practice physical distancing with staff and other clients, limit face-to-face interactions, practice frequent hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands <p>Potential exposure: If a client becomes unwell, then they should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolated immediately; Provided with a surgical mask; and Referred to the COVID-19 Isolation Program. 	Vulnerable Populations.
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Isolation Program (Suspected COVID-19)			
Role	Activities	Guidance/Recommendation	Source
Shelter staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intake assessments, providing support services, meal drop-offs, responding to emergency situations, etc. <p>Note: Duties have been modified in response to the pandemic and are outlined in the COVID-19 Isolation Program Protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, limit face-to-face interactions, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands <p>Potential exposure: PPE is required when staff must provide direct service within 2m of a client suspected to have COVID-19.</p> <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask, 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>

Housing Services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. 	
Health care staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing, treating and providing direct care to clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift • PPE required when assessing/treating clients (less than 2m) and performing close contact procedures that may result in the spread of droplets. <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask or N95 mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands. 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Primary Care Providers in a Community Setting.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>
Cleaning staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning communal spaces, high-touch surfaces and client rooms after discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift • PPE required for cleaning activities in common areas and client rooms due to increased risk of exposure to the virus <p>Recommended PPE for common areas:</p>	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves (refer to the Risk Assessment if interaction requires touching contaminated surfaces or symptomatic clients). <p>Recommended PPE for client rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, Gown. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All must be removed immediately after the cleaning activity is completed or upon exiting a client’s room • Rooms should be cleaned after discharge (e.g., when the client is no longer in the room) to limit close contact <p>Potential exposure: If a room must be cleaned while a client is present, the client should be re-located until the activity is completed.</p>	<p>Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>
Security staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining security of facility by managing entrance/exit and completing interior and exterior patrols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift • Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, limit face-to-face interactions, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE required for screening and patrolling on client floors <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask - Eye protection <p>Potential exposure: PPE may be required when staff must provide direct service to a client within 2m.</p> <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. 	<p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>
Clients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating, sleeping, accessing supports onsite, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE required when leaving private rooms or receiving necessary visits from medical, shelter, cleaning or security staff to reduce the transmission of the virus. <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to practice physical distancing with staff and other clients, limit face-to-face interactions, practice frequent hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands. 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p>

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Recovery Program (Confirmed COVID-19 Positive)			
Role	Activities	Guidance/Recommendation	Source
Shelter staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intake assessments, providing support services, meal drop-offs, responding to emergency situations, etc. <p>Note: Duties have been modified in response to the pandemic and are outlined in the COVID-19 Recovery Program Protocols.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask required when onsite for duration of shift. Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands Clothing should be removed after shift and washed with regular laundry <p>Potential exposure: PPE is required when staff must provide direct service within 2m of a client with COVID-19.</p> <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>
Health care staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing, treating and providing direct care to clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift PPE required when assessing/treating clients (less than 2m) and performing close contact procedures that may result in the spread of droplets. <p>Recommended PPE:</p>	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands. 	Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.
Cleaning staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning communal spaces, high-touch surfaces and client rooms after discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift • PPE required for cleaning activities in common areas and client rooms due to increased risk of exposure <p>Recommended PPE for common areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves (refer to the Risk Assessment if interaction requires touching contaminated surfaces or symptomatic clients). <p>Recommended PPE for client rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. 	Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations. IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All must be removed immediately after the cleaning activity is completed or upon exiting a client's room Rooms should be cleaned after discharge (e.g., when the client is no longer in the room) to limit close contact <p>Potential exposure: If a room must be cleaned while a client is present, the client should be re-located until the activity is completed.</p>	
Security staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining security of facility by managing entrance/exit and completing interior and exterior patrols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask required when onsite for the duration of the shift Continue to practice physical distancing with clients and co-workers, limit face-to-face interactions, practice hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands Clothing should be removed after shift and washed with regular laundry PPE required for screening and patrolling on client floors <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask, Eye protection. <p>Potential exposure: PPE is required when staff must provide direct service to a client within 2m.</p> <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask, 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p> <p>IPAC Recommendations for Use of PPE for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19.</p>

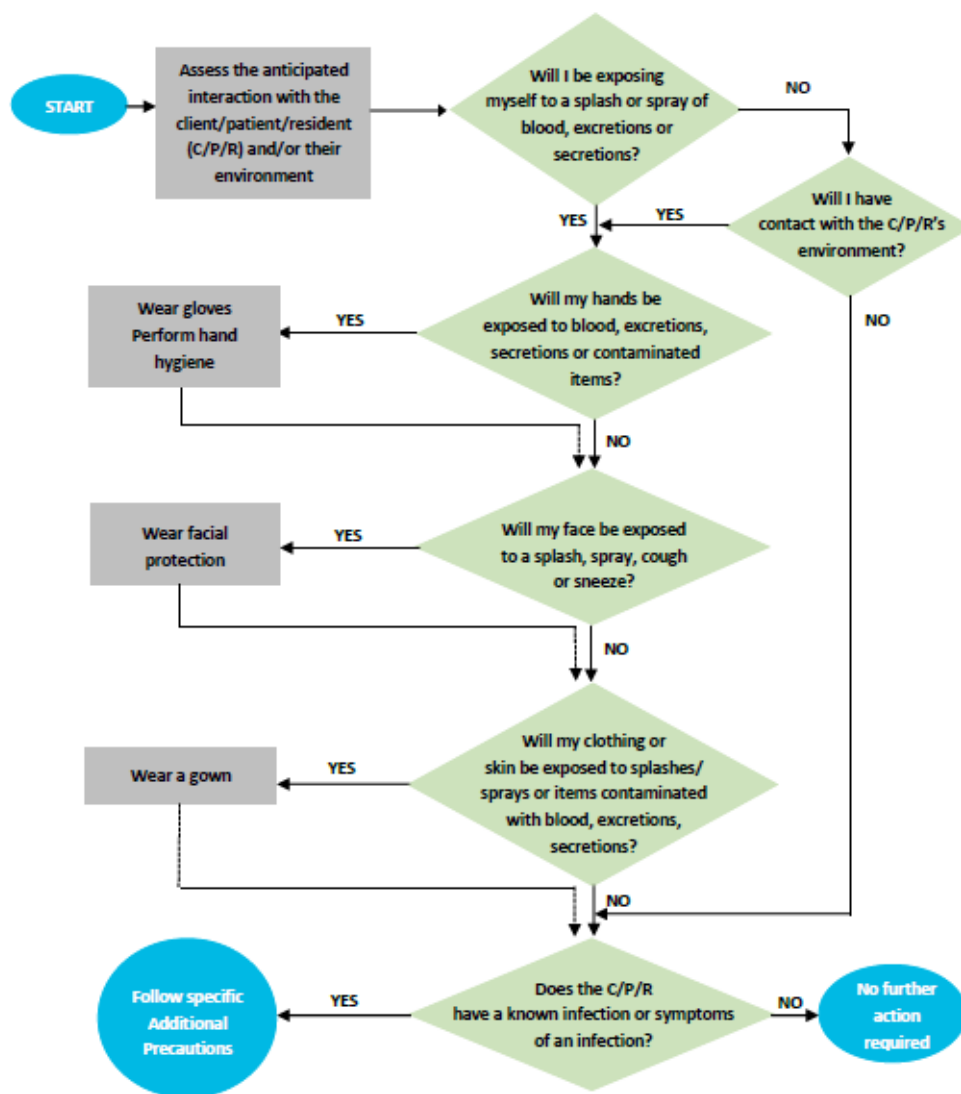
Housing Services

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eye protection, - Gloves, - Gown. 	
<p>Clients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating, sleeping, accessing supports onsite, interacting with other clients, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE required when leaving private room/area or receiving necessary visits from medical, shelter, cleaning or security staff to reduce the transmission of the virus. <p>Recommended PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surgical mask, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to practice physical distancing with staff and other clients, limit face-to-face interactions, practice frequent hand hygiene and avoid touching face with unwashed hands • Clothing should be washed regularly through the laundry service provided. 	<p>Ministry of Health's COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations.</p>

Risk Assessments

An individual assessment of each client/patient/resident’s potential risk of transmission must be made by all health care providers and other staff who come into contact with them. Based on that risk assessment, the appropriate intervention and interaction strategies, such as hand hygiene, waste management and use of PPE can be determined to limit the exposure.

Routine Practices Risk Assessment Algorithm for All Client/Patient/Resident Interactions



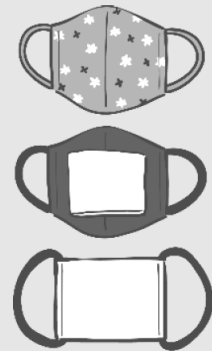
For more information, please refer to [Public Health Ontario's Best Practices for Routine Practices and Additional Precautions](#).

How to Safely Use Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings

The recommended steps from Public Health Ontario are outlined below:

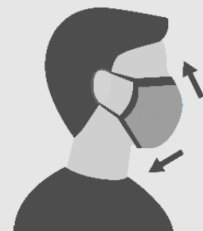
What kind of non-medical mask or face covering should I use

- No specific design or material is known to be better than others.
- The [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) provides guidance on how to make cloth masks.
- Make sure each cloth mask is made of at least two layers and can be laundered multiple times without losing shape or deteriorating.
- Don't offer to children under the age of two, or individuals who are unable to wear it e.g., medical condition, or unable to wear/remove properly.



How to wear a non-medical mask or face covering

- Clean your hands with [soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#) for at least 15 seconds.
- Make sure it fits **snugly (no gaps between mask and face)** to cover the nose and mouth, i.e., from below the eyes to around the chin.
- Secure it with ties or ear loops so that it is comfortable, and doesn't hinder breathing and vision.
- **Avoid touching the front of the mask or face covering while wearing it** – if you do, clean your hands immediately.
- Wear it as long as it is comfortable, and remove when it becomes soiled, damp, damaged or difficult to breathe through.
- Do not share your mask with others.



How to remove and care for non-medical masks or face coverings that can be cleaned

- Remove carefully by grasping the straps only and place directly in the laundry.
- If you have to use it again before washing, ensure that the front of the mask folds in on itself to avoid touching the front. Store it in its own bag, e.g., paper bag.
- Immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 15 seconds.
- Machine wash with hot water and with regular detergent, which should kill any viruses.
- The [Ministry of Health](#) has more information on the use and care of non-medical masks and face coverings.

Additional resources on the use of non-medical masks and face coverings:

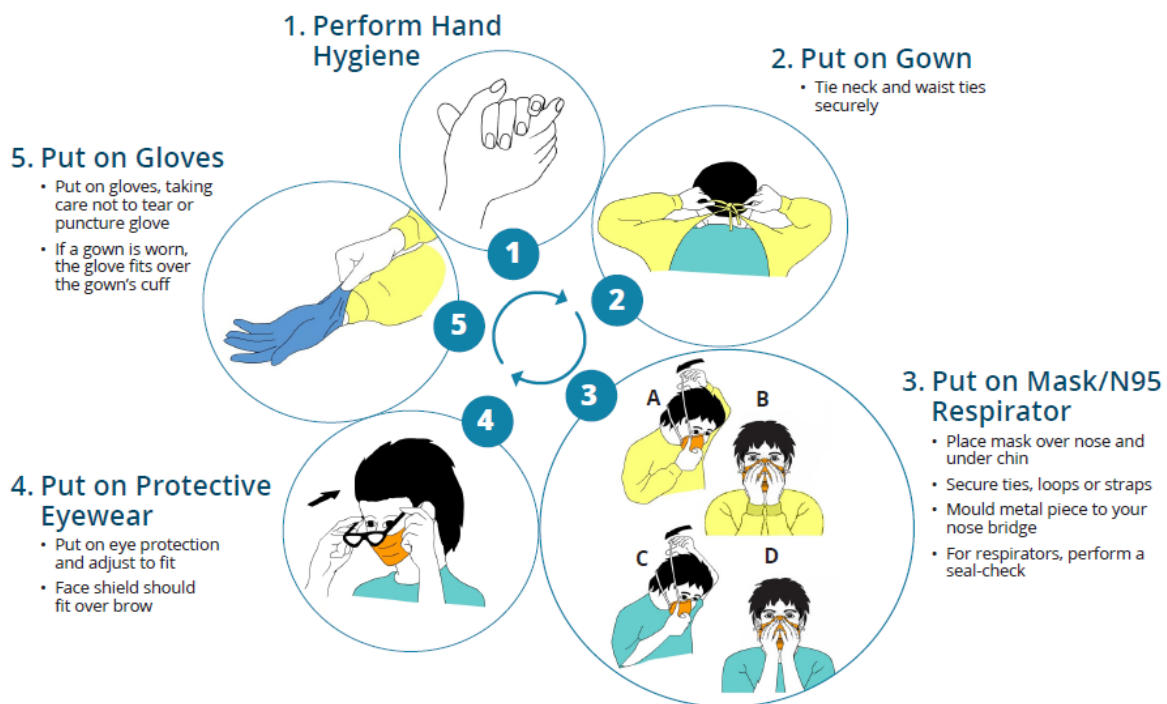
- [Public Health Ontario Non-Medical Mask and Face Covering Fact Sheet](#)
- [Government of Canada How to Safety Use Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings](#)

Recommended Steps for Putting on and Taking off PPE

It is crucial that the proper procedures for putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) PPE are followed accordingly. Otherwise, this control measure will not be effective and result in a spread of the virus to the user and other individuals.

The recommended steps from Public Health Ontario are outlined below:

Recommended Steps: Putting On Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



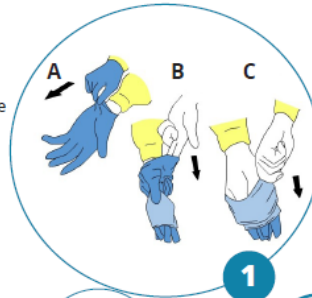
For more information, please contact Public Health Ontario's Infection Prevention and Control Department at ipac@oahpp.ca or visit www.publichealthontario.ca.



Recommended Steps: Taking Off Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

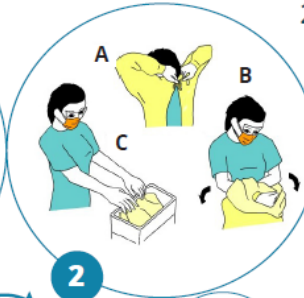
1. Remove Gloves

- Remove gloves using a glove-to-glove / skin-to-skin technique
- Grasp outside edge near the wrist and peel away, rolling the glove inside-out
- Reach under the second glove and peel away
- Discard immediately into waste receptacle



2. Remove Gown

- Remove gown in a manner that prevents contamination of clothing or skin
- Starting with waist ties, then neck ties, pull the gown forward from the neck ties and roll it so that the contaminated outside of the gown is to the inside. Roll off the arms into a bundle, then discarded immediately in a manner that minimizes air disturbance.



6. Perform Hand Hygiene

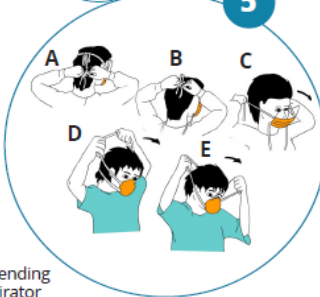


3. Perform Hand Hygiene



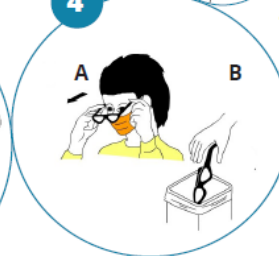
5. Remove Mask/ N95 Respirator

- Ties/ear loops/straps are considered 'clean' and may be touched with hands
- The front of the mask/respirator is considered to be contaminated
- Untie bottom tie then top tie, or grasp straps or ear loops
- Pull forward off the head, bending forward to allow mask/respirator to fall away from the face
- Discard immediately into waste receptacle



4. Remove Eye Protection

- Arms of goggles and headband of face shields are considered to be 'clean' and may be touched with the hands
- The front of goggles/face shield is considered to be contaminated
- Remove eye protection by handling ear loops, sides or back only
- Discard into waste receptacle or into appropriate container to be sent for reprocessing
- Personally-owned eyewear may be cleaned by the individual after each use



This is an excerpt from Routine Practices and Additional Precautions In All Health Care Settings (Appendix L) and was reformatted for ease of use.

Additional resources on the proper use of PPE:

- [Video from Public Health Ontario on Putting on Full PPE](#)
- [Video from Public Health Ontario on Taking off Full PPE](#)
- [Video from the World Health Organization on Using Surgical Masks](#)
- [IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19](#)

Key Contacts

For more information on this document, please contact **Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700** or **Peel Housing Services at 905-453-1300**.