

CIRCULAR

Date: October 20, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19 2020-160

To: CLDS and CFS residential and group care providers, day services and day service transportation providers

Subject: **PPE guidance for residential and group care providers, day services and day service transportation services**

Type: Procedure

Effective Date: Effective Immediately

This circular outlines the expected use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in residential and group care settings, day services, including day service transportation. It also explains Public Health's role where positive or suspect cases of COVID-19 are identified.

***NEW:** Care providers **must** wear eye shields continuously in CLDS residential care facilities, day services, day service transportation and CFS group care homes, including private homes, at the direction of Public Health. This is in addition to continuous mask use.

CLDS and CFS residential care and group care providers, day service providers and day service transportation services must follow public health fundamentals, including self-screening daily and staying at home when sick, practicing frequent and proper hand hygiene, covering coughs and physical distancing (2 meters or 6 feet) to the greatest degree possible.

In consultation with Public Health, agency providers are directed to wear the following PPE when interacting with residents as per the situations identified below:

- **Masks:** Staff must continue to wear the disposable, medical-grade masks that are provided to agencies by the department at all times while in homes. Extended use of the same mask for repeated interactions with multiple patients is permitted. Change the mask if it becomes wet, damaged or soiled. For details see: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/extended-use-of-face-masks.pdf>

CLARIFICATION issued October 23, 2020: Day service transportation providers are required to wear medical masks for the duration of their shift.

- **Eye protection:** Residential and group care staff, day services staff and staff that enter private homes to deliver services must wear eye protection continuously throughout the shift.

CORRECTION issued October 23, 2020: Day service transportation providers are not required to wear eye protection while driving. Day Service transportation providers who enter day service facilities should don eye protection prior to entering the facility and remove eye protection after leaving the facility and prior to driving. When removed, eye protection should be cleaned and disinfected and placed in a clean (not previously used) plastic or paper bag, or container.

- Eye frames are reusable and should be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each shift, then safely stored in a sealable bag, per protocols provided by public health.
- Eye lenses are discarded at the end of each shift, unless they need to be replaced during the shift due to damage or being soiled.
- **Gloves:** Staff must wear gloves per routine practice (e.g. Scabies, blood or body fluid contact or excessive soiling). If staff must enter a home in an emergency (e.g., protection) and screening residents for symptoms prior to entry is not possible, staff should put on gloves before entering the home.
- **Gowns:** Staff must wear a gown when providing care to a resident who is COVID-19 suspect or positive. The same gown cannot be reused to provide care to more than one individual. Staff must dispose of their used gowns when they leave the room of the resident who is COVID-19 suspect or positive, and prior to leaving the home or facility.
 - Reusable gowns should be placed in a laundry hamper after caring for a suspect/positive resident and washed in hot, soapy water before reuse.

For further details and instructions related to PPE use, see page 29 of the Shared Health PPE guidance document: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-provincial-ppe-requirements.pdf>.

The continuous use of PPE during a shift is vital in lowering the risk of contracting or spreading the virus or being identified as a close contact. If masks need to be removed during a shift (i.e. to eat, drink or smoke) this should be done in isolation from other staff or residents or while practicing physical distancing (i.e., 2 meters or 6 feet) from all other staff or residents.

Agencies are reminded that in instances where positive or suspect COVID-19 cases are identified, Public Health will perform a case investigation and advise and provide detailed instructions, including instructions related to isolation and self-isolation (quarantine). Remember that Public Health direction is provided on a case-by-case basis and will be tailored to the specific circumstances of a case.

Public Health will follow up with anyone deemed a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and will advise on self-isolation (quarantine) or isolation and

when the discontinuance of self-isolation (quarantine) or isolation protocols can be considered. Information about the differences between isolation and self-isolation are available on the Public Health Agency of Canada website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks.html>.

If you have any questions, please contact your CLDS Leading Program and Practice or CFS Licensing Specialist.

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