

CIRCULAR

Date: November 10, 2020

CIRCULAR NUMBER: COVID-19 2020-186

To: All Department of Families funded services and all department staff

Subject: Clarification - Medical Grade Masks

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only

Procedure

Effective Date: November 10, 2020

The Department of Families has distributed disposable medical-grade masks to funded services throughout the province, for use by staff since April 2020.

In early learning and child care, staff cannot always maintain physical distance from children and may work with more than one cohort. The added proactive measure of changing from reusable cloth masks to disposable, medical grade masks was implemented in late October to help keep children and staff healthy.

We recently have become aware of some concerns about the masks that were distributed. Please be assured that the masks provided by the department are safe to use. All masks distributed by the department meet the specifications provided by Shared Health.

Some of the masks were initially purchased in 2009 as part of Manitoba's response to combat H1N1. These masks had been kept in a temperature-controlled facility to prolong their useful life and were reviewed by Infection Prevention and Control as well as Occupational and Environmental Safety and Health. These masks were deemed appropriate for use before being distributed.

A small number of people who have used these masks have reported a dermal reaction, and can be provided with alternate masks, as is standard practice.

Here are some links to Shared Health resources that can assist with any reactions to masks:

- Personal Protective Equipment and Skin Related Issues Occupational Health or Designate Internal Process <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ppe-and-skin-injuries-internal-oh-process.pdf>
- Quick Reference Guide Prevention & Management of Skin Injury from Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ppe-skin-injury-qrg.pdf>
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Tips for Prevention of Skin Injury <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-ppe-skin-injury-poster.pdf>

Thank you again for your commitment to maintaining a safe environment for the people we serve throughout this challenging time.

Please email FAMIC@gov.mb.ca if distribution issues arise or if you have problems with your shipment.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Gerrard,
Deputy Minister, Department of Families

c. Distribution Lists