

**CIRCULAR**

**Date:** May 25, 2020

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** COVID#: 2020-89

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**To:** CFS Authorities, CCP and CYSD staff

**Subject:** PPE Use Guidelines

**Program(s):** All

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**Type:**  Policy  For Internal Reference Only  
 Procedure  Information Only

**Effective Date:** Immediately

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Shared Health released a document called Personal Protective Equipment Supply Management and Stewardship Planning and Guidance Framework, available online at: [sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-provincial-ppe-framework-guidance.pdf](https://sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-provincial-ppe-framework-guidance.pdf)

This document is largely directed at the health care sector. However, some of the content has implications for other critical service areas, including FAM programs that have been directed to use PPE when providing services.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:**

FAM will continue to communicate any direction related to PPE use within the social services sector. At this time, there are minimal changes for our programs. Staff must continue to follow department direction related to PPE use in order to ensure sustainability and to provide the greatest protection to staff and the vulnerable people they serve.

**Update #1 – Use of procedure masks and cloth masks**

1. Procedure masks have been provided to essential staff when required due to their job function. Procedure masks should be worn if you have been directed by the department to do so.
2. The department is not supplying non-medical or cloth masks at this time; however, those who wish to wear non-medical or cloth masks may choose to do so if they are not part of the department's PPE directive.
3. Residents of a home may wear non-medical or cloth masks during home visits.
4. If a resident becomes ill, Public Health will provide direction related to PPE worn in the home by residents.

5. Before a mask (procedure or cloth) is put on and after it is removed, remember to **always** clean your hands using proper hand hygiene. While the mask is on your face, you should not be touching your face or the mask.

Shared Health advises that while non-medical or cloth masks are not a substitute for physical distancing and hand hygiene they are a viable additional measure that can protect others around the person who is wearing the mask, even if they are not exhibiting any symptoms.

Program participants and other residents should be encouraged to wear their own non-medical or cloth mask, including:

- during health care interactions (e.g., when visiting a primary care office, during an in-home visit or in hospital)
- when traveling (e.g., on public transit, handi-transit or by taxi)
- when attending regular appointments (e.g., dialysis)
- during in-home visits by critical service providers (e.g., therapist or someone entering the home to do repairs)

When wearing a non-medical face mask, you must do the following:

- wash your hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off
- practice good hand hygiene (hand washing or using hand sanitizer) while wearing the mask
- ensure your mask fits well (doesn't gape)
- do not share your mask with others

Cloth (e.g., cotton) masks and other non-medical PPE can become contaminated on the outside, or when touched by your hands. Avoid touching your face mask while wearing it, change your mask as soon as it is damp or soiled and place the mask directly into a bag or into the washing machine, launder your mask on a hot cycle and dry it thoroughly.

## **Update #2 – Use of procedure masks**

We have a shared responsibility to ensure the continued sustainability of the PPE supply for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have been directed to wear a procedure mask as a result of your job function, please use your procedure mask as follows:

- Use one procedure mask throughout the duration of your shift when possible. Change your mask if it becomes wet, damaged or soiled.
- Before a procedure mask is put on and after it is removed, remember to **always** clean your hands using proper hand hygiene. While the mask is on your face, you should not be touching your face or the mask.

Medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (N95 and similar), must be kept for health care workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 positive and suspect patients.

## **NOTE**

If you provide group care (e.g., you work in a single home or facility setting for the duration of your shift) and you need to remove your mask at any time (e.g., to eat or drink) follow these steps (applies if no one in the home is COVID positive):

1. Perform hand hygiene by washing your hands or using hand sanitizer.
2. Remove your mask by the earloop bands.
3. Please the mask face down in a clean reusable container that has been washed before each use.
4. Once you have completed the activity, perform hand hygiene by washing your hands or using hand sanitizer.
5. Pick up the mask by the earloop bands and put it back on your face. Be careful not to touch the front of the mask while putting back on.
6. Perform hand hygiene by washing your hands or using hand sanitizer.

### **Update #3 – Use of eye shields**

In group care, in-home visits and in mobile crisis response, one set of eye protection (e.g. eye shields) is to be used throughout the shift. Eye frames can be washed with soap and water and reused over multiple shifts.

Store in a way to prevent contamination (e.g. in a Ziploc bag or in a reusable container that is washed before each use). At the end of your shift, clean frame with soap and water and store in a way to prevent contamination (e.g., in a Ziploc bag or in a reusable container that is washed before each use). Discard lenses after every shift. Staff are to perform hand hygiene before and after removing or storing eye protection.

### **Reminder**

PPE should be worn continuously, even during outdoor activities. This is because:

1. Putting on and removing PPE increases risk of contamination
2. Continuous use supports conservation of PPE
3. Staff cannot guarantee that social distancing will always be maintained while outside

Sincerely,  
Sarah Thiele  
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