

**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR**

**Date:** February 1, 2022

**CIRCULAR NUMBER:** 2021-21(r5) - COVID-19 **(New information appears in bold.)**

---

**To:** Child and Family Services Community Care Providers (Group Care)

**Subject:** Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for CFS Community Care Providers

---

**Type:**  Policy

Procedure

**Effective Date:** Immediately

---

This circular provides guidance on the required use of personal protective equipment (PPE) related to COVID-19 for Child and Family Services (CFS) community care provider (CCP) group care staff and visitors. It also outlines the mask requirements in specific situations for CFS residents who can safely wear a mask.

**Public health recommendations on the use of N95 masks and medical masks have recently been updated. Fit-tested N95 masks are now the default option for respiratory protection when caring for children and youth who are a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. However, if following an [assessment of risk](#), staff feel a medical mask is appropriate, they can choose to wear one.**

**Medical masks remain the default option for respiratory protection for staff when supporting no suspected COVID-19 cases. However, if following an [assessment of risk](#), staff feel a fitted N95 mask is appropriate, they can choose to wear one.**

The use of PPE is vital to lowering the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to a confirmed case. As a reminder, PPE use should always be combined with other protective measures, such as physical distancing, frequent hand hygiene, not touching ones' eyes, nose, or mouth, cough and sneeze etiquette and staying home when ill. In addition, staff must [self-screen](#) every day.

Definitions

"COVID-19 suspect" is a person who has been tested and the result is pending OR those who, based on clinical symptoms and/or exposure history, need to be tested for COVID-19 **(including those who choose not to be tested)**. Exposure history includes close contact in

the last 14 days with a known COVID-19 case OR travel outside of Manitoba in the last 14 days.

“COVID-19 confirmed” is a person who has been tested, has a positive test result and has not recovered.

“Indoors” means inside a group care facility, but does not include an “indoor public place” as defined by the Orders under The Public Health Act.

“Participant” is a person who resides in a CFS CCP group care setting.

**“No suspected COVID-19 case” is a person who does not meet the exposure or symptomatic criteria for testing and/or a person who was a confirmed COVID-19 case and has recovered.**

“Staff” is a person who is employed by a CFS CCP to provide shift-staffed care in a group care setting. For the purpose of this circular, CCP clinicians, cultural workers and other supports are also considered staff, as are Department of Families staff who attend the facility.

“Visitor” is a person, other than a staff or other professional (e.g., department staff, clinician, cultural worker etc.) who visits a CFS CCP group care setting.

#### PPE Use While in the Group Care Setting

Staff must wear medical masks and eye protection while indoors at CCP facilities. In addition, staff must wear gloves and gowns when providing direct care to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The table below outlines the PPE requirements for staff while indoors at CCP facilities:

PPE	No Suspected COVID-19 Case	COVID-19 Suspect/Confirmed Case
<b>Medical Mask</b>	<b>Default<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Optional<sup>2</sup></b>
Eye Protection	Yes	Yes
<b>N95 Mask</b>	<b>Optional<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Default<sup>2</sup></b>
Gloves	No	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Gowns	No	Yes <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Default option for no suspected COVID-19 case is a medical mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a fit-tested N95 mask may be selected.

<sup>2</sup> Default option for COVID-19 suspected/confirmed case is a fit-tested N95 mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a medical mask may be selected.

<sup>3</sup> Required if direct physical contact is likely with a suspect/confirmed case.

#### PPE Use While in Transit

Participants who can safely wear masks must wear a medical mask while in transit with staff.

Staff who are passengers must wear medical masks and eye protection while in transit. Staff who are driving must wear a medical mask, but must not wear eye protection. If staff are transporting a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case (e.g., from their home to a testing site), **the default option would be to wear a fit-tested N95 mask while in transit. Staff must**

wear gloves and gowns if they are likely to have direct physical contact with COVID-19 suspect/confirmed cases.

The table below outlines the PPE requirements for staff who are driving while in transit:

PPE	No Suspected COVID-19 Case	COVID-19 Suspect/Confirmed Case
<b>Medical Mask</b>	<b>Default<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Optional<sup>2</sup></b>
Eye Protection	No	No <sup>3</sup>
<b>N95 Mask</b>	<b>Optional<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Default<sup>2</sup></b>
Gloves	No	No <sup>4</sup>
Gowns	No	No <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Default option for no suspected COVID-19 case is medical mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a fit-tested N95 mask may be selected.

<sup>2</sup> Default option for COVID-19 suspected/confirmed case is fit-tested N95 mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a medical mask may be selected.

<sup>3</sup> Required before and after transit.

<sup>4</sup> Required before and after transit if direct physical contact is likely.

The table below outlines the PPE requirements for staff who passengers while in transit:

PPE	No Suspected COVID-19 Case	COVID-19 Suspect/Confirmed Case
<b>Medical Mask</b>	<b>Default<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Optional<sup>2</sup></b>
Eye Protection	Yes	Yes
<b>N95 Mask</b>	<b>Optional<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Default<sup>2</sup></b>
Gloves	No	<b>Yes<sup>3</sup></b>
Gowns	No	<b>Yes<sup>3</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Default option for no suspected COVID-19 case is a medical mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a fit-tested N95 mask may be selected.

<sup>2</sup> Default option for COVID-19 suspected/confirmed case is a fit-tested N95 mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a medical mask may be selected.

<sup>3</sup> Required if direct physical contact is likely.

#### PPE Use While Supporting Participants in Indoor Public Places

Staff must wear medical masks while supporting participants in indoor public places (e.g., malls, museums, stores, restaurants, etc.). Staff may also choose to wear eye protection (optional).

If staff are supporting a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in an indoor public place (e.g., testing site or health care facility), they must wear eye protection and a fit-tested N95 mask (or after completion of an assessment for risk, a medical mask may be selected). **Staff must also wear gloves and gowns if they are likely to have direct physical contact with COVID-19 suspect/confirmed cases.**

**Participants who can safely wear masks are encouraged to wear medical masks while in indoor public places, but they may choose to wear non-medical (i.e., cloth) masks.**

#### PPE Use While Outdoors

Staff are not required to wear PPE while supporting participants outdoors, unless they are outside for the purpose of transporting a participant in a vehicle. However, if physical distancing cannot be maintained or is unlikely to be maintained, it is recommended that staff

wear medical masks while outdoors. Staff may also choose to wear eye protection outdoors (optional).

If staff who work in a CCP facility are wearing an fit-tested N95 mask because they are providing direct care to a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, they can continue to wear it if they need to go outdoors (e.g., for the purposes of transporting a participant to a testing site). **Staff must also wear gloves and gowns if they are likely to have direct physical contact with COVID-19 suspect/confirmed cases.**

The table below outlines PPE requirements for staff while outdoors if physical distancing cannot or is unlikely to be maintained:

PPE	No Suspected COVID-19 Case	COVID-19 Suspect/Confirmed Case
<b>Medical Mask</b>	<b>Default<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Optional<sup>2</sup></b>
Eye Protection	Optional	Yes
<b>N95 Mask</b>	<b>Optional<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Default<sup>2</sup></b>
Gloves	No	<b>Yes<sup>3</sup></b>
Gowns	No	<b>Yes<sup>3</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup> Default option for no suspected COVID-19 case is medical mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a fit-tested N95 mask may be selected.

<sup>2</sup> Default option for COVID-19 suspected/confirmed case is a fit-tested N95 mask. After completion of an assessment for risk, a medical mask may be selected.

<sup>3</sup> Required if direct physical contact is likely.

While not required by public health, participants may choose to wear a mask while outdoors.

### **N95 Mask Information**

Fit-tested N95 masks are now the default option for respiratory protection for staff supporting participants who are a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. However, if following an [assessment of risk](#), staff feel a medical mask is appropriate, they can choose to wear one.

Medical masks remain the default option for respiratory protection for staff supporting no suspected COVID-19 cases. However, if following an [assessment of risk](#), staff feel a fit-tested N95 mask is appropriate, they can choose to wear one.

**Please refer to Appendix A for frequently asked questions regarding N95 mask use. Please note staff must be fit-tested for N95 masks before using them.**

### **PPE Use for Visitors**

Visitors (other than essential CCP staff and Department staff) must wear a medical mask when visiting participants in a group care setting. Essential CCP staff and department staff must wear a medical mask and protective eyewear when visiting indoors in a group care setting. In exceptional circumstances where a visit to a facility by an essential CCP staff or department staff with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case is permitted, the visitor will also be required to wear gloves and a gown.

Visitors are not required to wear PPE when visiting participants at a group care setting if the visit occurs outside. While not required by public health, visitors may choose to wear a mask while outdoors.

More Information

Service providers must provide the required PPE for staff, participants and visitors as outlined in this circular. Please note that the department does not supply non-medical (e.g., cloth) masks. **Service providers must provide a medical mask for participants to use upon request, regardless of the setting (e.g., home, indoor public place, transportation).**

If you have any COVID-19 questions related to this circular, please contact Gord Henwood by email at [gord.henwood@gov.mb.ca](mailto:gord.henwood@gov.mb.ca) or by phone at (204) 795-0460. **Please contact Lorna Ives at [Lorna.Ives@gov.mb.ca](mailto:Lorna.Ives@gov.mb.ca) if you require assistance with the N95 fit testing process.**

---

Lorna Hanson  
Deputy Director  
Child Protection Branch  
Child and Youth Services Division

cc: Distribution List

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding N95 Mask Use  
Appendix B: General Guidance on the Proper Use of PPE

## **Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding N95 Mask Use**

### **1. Why do I need to be fit-tested for an N95 mask?**

An N95 mask needs to be fit-tested to your face to ensure a tight seal for an appropriate level of protection. Fit-testing for an N95 mask is a proactive measure and is required according to the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act. You need to be fit-tested for an N95 mask before wearing one.

### **2. Can I continue to wear a medical mask instead of choosing a fit-tested N95 mask? Medical masks remain the default option when supporting no suspected cases, but you may choose to wear a fit-tested N95 mask after an assessment of risk.**

**Fit-tested N95 masks are the default option when supporting suspected/confirmed COVID-19 cases, but you may choose to wear a medical mask after an assessment of risk.**

### **3. Can I reuse a fit-tested N95 mask?**

No. Staff must discard the N95 mask prior to breaks, meals, or if the mask becomes wet, damaged or soiled.

### **4. How can I access a fit-tested N95 mask?**

Once you have been fit-tested, the department will provide your employer with N95 masks that you can use.

## **Appendix B: General Guidance on the Proper Use of PPE**

Staff must practice meticulous hand hygiene throughout their shift and when donning and doffing PPE. Please refer to Shared Health's instructional materials for [donning](#) and [doffing](#) and/or their videos for [donning](#) and [doffing](#). Staff should don/doff PPE in isolation from others.

- **Medical masks:** Staff must change their medical mask if it becomes wet, soiled or damaged and at breaks.

**Note:** If participants can safely wear a mask, they must wear a medical mask while in transit with staff.

- **Fit-tested N95 masks:** Staff must change their N95 mask if it becomes wet, soiled, or damaged, and at breaks.
- **Eye protection:** Protective eyewear must be worn over prescription glasses. If eye protection needs to be removed for any reason, frames and lenses must be cleaned and disinfected. At the end of each shift, staff must discard lenses, and retain, clean and disinfect frames and place in a wipeable, disinfected container for their next shift.
- **Gloves:** Staff must wear gloves at all times when providing direct care to a participant who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. Staff can stop wearing gloves once the participant's [isolation/self-isolation](#) period is complete. Staff must change gloves between each participant interaction and perform hand hygiene. If the gloves become visibly soiled or torn when providing direct care, staff must discard the gloves immediately, perform hand hygiene and put on new gloves.
- **Gowns:** Staff must wear gowns at all times when providing direct care to a participant who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. Staff can stop wearing gowns once the participant's [isolation/self-isolation](#) period is complete. Staff must change gowns between each participant interaction and perform hand hygiene. For disposable gowns, staff must discard their used gown in a garbage container when they leave the room of the confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case and prior to leaving the facility. For reusable gowns, staff must place gowns in a laundry hamper separate from other clothing after providing direct care to a participant and wash them separately from other clothing in hot, soapy water before reuse. Hand hygiene must be performed immediately after a gown has been removed.

If a participant becomes a confirmed COVID-19 case, the department's Pandemic Response Nurses or public health will provide additional guidance regarding the appropriate use of PPE.