



The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Bulletin has been created to improve the communication regarding the recommended guidelines, process and provincial supply of PPE.

The bulletin provides ongoing direction to health-care providers and clarity regarding PPE utilization. It is released as needed, with updates on practice recommendations, solutions, contingency plans and other developments as they occur.

A provincial committee made up of physicians, relevant Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) operational leaders and the Ministry of Health ensures necessary focus and importance is placed on this critical area of pandemic planning and operations. The group support the critical and emerging needs of our staff, physicians and partners in the community, as well as evidence and guidance of national and international bodies.

A PPE Framework has been developed which provides guidance for clinical, ethical, and operational structures and principles applied to effectively manage PPE in the context of a pandemic and anticipated critical supply shortages. In addition, the framework provides detailed guidance on required actions broken down by multiple settings, personnel and PPE risk assessment level.

This guidance is subject to change based on evidence and the progression of the pandemic and will be updated as required.

SHA OH&S COVID-19 Health-Care Worker Hotline, Email

The SHA's Occupational Health and Safety Team launched an OH&S hotline and email for all SHA physicians and employees and affiliate employees.

The hotline and email is available to all SHA physicians, employees and affiliate employees who have questions around their workplace safety. Nurses will help work through inquiries about potential exposures to COVID-19, **PPE questions and concerns**, returning to work, etc. Hotline business hours are 7 days a week, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Contact the OH&S COVID -19 Health Care Worker Hotline and email at:

- 1-833-233-4403
- OHS_Healthcareworkers_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca

Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMP) List available:

A list of [AGMP's](#) is available at [Saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers](https://saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers). The list was designed with physician and staff safety as a first principle and vetted by the AGMP committee. Take a moment to review both pages in this document in order to choose the most appropriate PPE in your clinical setting. Please continue to check the saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers site under PPE on a regular basis to get the most up-to-date information.



Current Provincial Droplet/Contact Plus PPE Guidelines:

For suspect/confirmed COVID-19 patients, the following precautions and PPE must be used:

Suspect/Confirmed COVID-19:	Suspect/Confirmed COVID-19 patient that requires Aerosol-Generating Medical Procedure (AGMP) (see list and recommended patient placement below):
Precautions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Droplet/Contact Plus Personal Protective Equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facial/Eye Protection• Procedure/Surgical mask• Combination mask/facial protection• Gown (Level 1 or 2)• Gloves	Precautions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Droplet/Contact Plus Personal Protective Equipment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• N95 Respirator• Facial/Eye Protection• Gown (Level 2)• Gloves
Prioritization of patient placement:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a negative pressure room is not available AGMPs should be performed in a private room with hard walls and the door closed.	

[Summary of PPE recommendations](#) are available at saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers for the following:

- Acute Care
- Primary Care
- Home Care
- Continuing Care
- Family member and support person
- Patients/residents/clients
- When caring for patients/residents with confirmed to have COVID-19 in designated units/cohorted spaced
- Testing and assessment sites

Important things to Note:

- A [list of AGMPs](#) is available on the [Saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers](https://saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers) site.
- Eye protection must **ALWAYS** be worn when working with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Please refer to the [Rapid Update on Eye Protection](#) for more information. Personal eyeglasses are not sufficient eye protection.
- Nasopharyngeal swab is not considered an AGMP.
- If required, patients/residents/clients and family members should don a procedure mask (not an N95).
- If a procedure mask or N95 respirator becomes damaged, wet and/or soiled, it needs to be changed.
- Appropriate [donning](#) and [doffing](#) should be performed. N95 respirator must be doffed outside of the patient room.



SHA Current Status of Supplies

The SHA and Ministry of health, along with other health partners are actively monitoring current supplies of PPE across the health system.

PPE

- Saskatchewan currently has an adequate supply of core PPE items, including procedure masks, N95 respirators and gloves, gowns and face shields.
- We continue to purchase and aggressively pursue supply through a variety of methods to meet the needs of our health sector, including:
 - Ordering through regular supply channels: we are continuing to receive orders through these channels, but are monitoring closely given global supply issues.
 - Working with the federal government to receive Saskatchewan's share of any PPE procured through federal channels.

Supply Chain Management and Contingency Plans

Ensuring the safety of health care workers is critical to Saskatchewan's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We must work diligently to deliberately manage, monitor and utilize PPE supplies appropriately, strategically, and in response to the situation on the ground.

The MOH and SHA are working to ensure that medical supplies and PPE are being managed and shared across the health care system, and prioritizing distribution to ensure availability in the most critical situations. The focus is currently on conserving existing PPE while actively procuring additional supply through any and all avenues.

The SHA is actively investigating and developing the following solutions and contingency plans to ensure staff have access to the right PPE at the right time:

- Modification of supply chain distribution to better track and control the distribution of PPE (e.g. N95), including the centralization of PPE inventory to improve tracking, management, procurement and controlled allocation throughout the province.
- Distribution of PPE guidelines on the saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers website to detail what PPE is required for what situations in Acute Care, Continuing Care, Primary Care and Home Care, etc.
- Ordering conventional PPE products (e.g. disposable gowns, standard N95s) as well as others that are available to implement alternatives if necessary.
- Working with federal government to secure supply at national level.
- Engaging with other industries to identify new opportunities to order PPE.
- Collecting ideas on how to 3D print various types of PPE (e.g. face shields) to supplement the current and future supplies of PPE and exploring innovations or emerging best practices to conserve or repurpose PPE (e.g. extended tubing to have pumps outside rooms). Staff, physicians and industry experts can contribute ideas and collaborate by registering at SHA Ideas (ideas.saskhealthauthority.ca).
- Reviewing processes and technologies that will increase longevity of supplies, such as reprocessing masks.



Questions and Answers:

1. Can I bring in and use my own PPE?

The SHA understands the fear and anxiety associated with the uncertainty of this global pandemic. However, at this time staff and physicians should not be bringing in personal PPE to use while working. There is considerable work ongoing to provide appropriate PPE to staff and physicians when and where it is needed.

PPE Recommendations for Acute, Continuing Care, Primary Care, Home Care, etc can be found on the [Saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers](https://www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers) website and have been created based on infection prevention and control (IPAC) guidance developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). This approach is aligned with the guidance provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has been endorsed by Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial Special Advisory Committee on COVID-19.

We are not permitting personal PPE at this time for the following reasons:

- Uncertainty as to the quality, fit and appropriateness of the PPE (e.g. protection level of mask or respirator), may not be the appropriate fit
- Non-standard products are not familiar to OHS and IPAC staff, preventing their ability to support usage, including the cleaning/disinfection of reusable PPE
- Using personal PPE (e.g. Tyvek suits, etc.) outside of recommended guidelines (built on scientific evidence) unnecessarily increases anxiety among other staff as to their own safety

2. What is the recommendations for management of unconscious or neurologically impaired patients in the Emergency Department who require intubation and cannot be confirmed COVID NEGATIVE?

If these patients cannot be thoroughly screened, they must be treated as *potentially COVID-19 POSITIVE*.

- a. The team providing care should wear appropriate PPE including N95 respirators for intubation. They should continue to wear this PPE during the entire process of patient management and transfers.
- b. **Regardless of stability of the patient, there is no recommendation to wait for settling time**, unless intubation is being done in the same location as the operative procedure.
- c. **Porters** assisting in the transport process DO NOT require N95 masks as the endotracheal tube and ventilator is a closed circuit. Risk associated with endotracheal tube disconnection from the circuit should be mitigated by other means, such as taping vent connections, using a filter on the circuit or having a person hold onto the tubing during transport in order to limit N95 use.