



The Safety Bulletin (formally known as the PPE Bulletin) has been created to provide ongoing direction to health care workers regarding the recommended safety guidelines, processes and personal protective equipment (PPE) supply. If you have any questions about PPE, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) or Safety as it relates to COVID-19 please call the OHS Hotline at 1-833-233-4403 or email [OHS\\_Healthcareworkers\\_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:OHS_Healthcareworkers_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca)

### Health Care Worker (HCW) Risk Matrix:

The recently updated [Health Care Worker Risk Matrix tool](#) provides standardized guidance on exposure criteria to assist in determining the assessment of risk, monitoring recommendations, and work restrictions that are indicated for Health Care Workers (HCW) with potential workplace exposures to COVID-19.

This tool, along with the [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#), is an important factor in determining the outcome of the workplace investigation when an exposure takes place and is to be utilized by those making decisions across the province. Application of this tool by Medical Health Officers, Medical Microbiologists, Occupational Health Physicians, and Public Health/Occupational Health/Employee Health Nurses ensures consistency across the province. There may be local nuances and additional clinical judgement that may influence decisions.

The first version of the HCW Risk Matrix was released in May 2020 and was reviewed and adapted based on our experiences, learnings and research here in Saskatchewan and across Canada. Epidemiological (EPI) data is utilized to trigger changes/elevations in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and is reflected in changes in policy and in this tool.

#### The updated tool identifies the following:

- Why the healthcare setting is considered a much more controlled environment that is different from community contacts
- The symptoms that increase the chance of transmission of infectious respiratory secretions
- What is an acceptable mask and how has risk changed with the *Continuous Mask Policy*
- What situations are low risk vs high risk regarding eye protection
- Clarification regarding risks and Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures (AGMPs)
- New tables clearly identify risk for HCWs when cases are Symptomatic vs Pre/Asymptomatic

### PPE Recommendations:

Confused about what you should be wearing when? Not sure what screeners should be wearing for PPE? Many of the questions about PPE can be answered by reviewing the following documents and recommendations:

- [PPE Recommendations](#)
- [PPE Bulletins](#)
- [PPE Rapid Updates](#)
- **If you still have any questions about PPE please call the OHS Hotline at 1-833-233-4403 or email [OHS\\_Healthcareworkers\\_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:OHS_Healthcareworkers_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca)**





### Break Room Safety:

**Effective immediately, the sharing of any food is strictly prohibited in Saskatchewan Health Authority facilities.** This includes, but is not limited to, individually wrapped items, birthday cakes, holiday baking trays, coffee carafes, etc. Please do not accept donations or gifts of this nature from staff members or members of the public.

This decision is partially based on an event recently held in which staff members from a unit came together to celebrate an event with shared food. Some precautions were followed, including physical distancing. Unfortunately, this gathering led to an outbreak that resulted in 10 staff members missing two weeks of work. A number of other outbreaks and required self-isolation have been traced back to improper use of shared spaces and sharing food in units across the province. These incidents result in lost time, reduce workforce levels and put more of our colleagues and patients at risk.

**Please be diligent about your use of break room and shared meeting room spaces.** Ensure proper distancing and wear your mask at all times unless eating or drinking (do not linger; we recommend no longer than 15 minutes unmasked). Do not use these spaces for any other activities, including sleeping.

We invite you to share your ideas of how you and your coworkers are staying safe or learn from others in the province on what they are doing to ensure proper distancing during breaks at [SHAideas](https://ideas.saskhealthauthority.ca) (use Chrome browser) [ideas.saskhealthauthority.ca](https://ideas.saskhealthauthority.ca).

We know it hasn't been an easy year. You are being asked to do more than ever during a very stressful time. The temptation to gather and share food, especially over the holidays, is understandable. However, it is simply not worth the risk. The safety of you and your patients/residents is our number one priority. Preventable transmission of COVID-19 within our own facilities is a problem we must immediately address. Our collective actions in adhering to COVID-19 protocols can set a positive example for the public and will help us all prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: The patient I'm caring for had a COVID-19 test that has come back positive. I wore a medical mask the whole time I cared for them, do I now need to isolate?**

Please discuss this with OHS for guidance. They will give you appropriate advice based on an assessment of risk.

