



The Safety 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 [contact your local Occupation Health or Employee Health Nursing team](#) or email infectioncontrol@saskhealthauthority.ca

The importance of Hand Hygiene:

Proper hand hygiene is an important factor to prevent the transmission (spread) of microorganisms, including the COVID-19 virus. The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) has an [authority-wide hand hygiene policy](#) which encourages open communication about hand hygiene and promoting a culture of safety so that improvements are addressed in a blame-free, respectful environment.

There are two methods of hand hygiene:

- Wash with soap and water: if hands are visibly soiled
- Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR): if hands are not visibly soiled

All SHA employees and physicians must perform hand hygiene before and after touching any patient/client/resident or their environment. Those working in patient/client/resident care areas follow the “4 Moments for Hand Hygiene”:

- BEFORE initial patient/client/resident contact or patient/client/resident environment contact.
- BEFORE aseptic procedure.
- AFTER body fluid exposure risk.
- AFTER patient/client/resident contact or patient/client/resident environment contact.

As well as the above, team members will also perform hand hygiene:

- When entering or exiting a facility or unit.
- Before putting on gloves, handling clean supplies or equipment, clean procedures such as preparing, handling, or serving food or medications, eating, moving to another activity, including when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during care delivery.
- Immediately after removing gloves.
- After performing personal functions such as blowing your nose or using the toilet.
- Any time hands are visibly soiled.
- Whenever in doubt that your hands are clean.

All employees and physicians have a duty to review, ensure they understand and follow the [hand hygiene policy](#).





The Importance of Respiratory Protection

Respiratory protection has always been a key component of PPE to keep individuals safe from workplace airborne hazards, but over the last year and a half we have all become more aware of just *how* important.

Respirators, specifically N95s have been one of the ways health care workers have protected themselves against the transfer of COVID-19 during an aerosol generating medical procedure (AGMP). They are also important for others in their every day job to protect them from airborne hazards.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has remained focused on developing information products to address frequently asked questions related to respiratory protection and personal protective equipment. This information has been vital in the recommendations that SHA has put forward for staff when it comes to respirator use during the pandemic. NIOSH has marked Sept. 7-10 as its annual Respiratory Protection Week, an event intended to promote proper respiratory protection practices through the sharing of related research findings and educational tools.

“This past year and everything we have been through has really emphasized the importance of respiratory protection and PPE,” Cynthia Leschyshyn, Director of Patient and Staff Safety with the SHA. “It is important that we help highlight this topic, and share the valuable resources that NIOSH and the SHA have available.”

The SHA continues to embark on its efforts to have all staff and physicians who must physically be in an SHA facility/home or affiliate fit tested to a respirator by December 1, 2021. As of September 1, 2021, the Respiratory Registry contains records for over 48,800 SHA staff and physicians, 31, 263 of which have an up to date fit test to a respirator.

For more information about respiratory protection in the SHA, Check out the following resources

- [Respiratory Protection Program at SHA](#)
- [Safety Bulletin - Fit Testing Update](#)
- [Safety Bulletin – Source of Truth for Facial Hair Policy](#)
- [Rapid Update – N95 Respirator Inspection](#)

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION WEEK

Participant

SEPTEMBER 7-10, 2021

