COVID-19

N95 Respirator and Eye Protection Collection for Sterilization and Reuse

As part of Manitoba’s overall approach to ensuring a sustainable supply of personal protective equipment (PPE), opportunities to collect, sterilize and reuse lightly used N95 respirators and plastic eye protection frames and lenses (where possible) are being explored.

Items Eligible for Sterilization and Reuse

Lightly used N95 respirators are eligible for sterilization. Soiled, wet, damp, stained, ripped or otherwise damaged respirators will not be reprocessed.

N95s exposed to hazardous agents (e.g. pharmacy, chemotherapy) and those used in care of patients with tuberculosis will not be reprocessed.

Note: Health care workers are reminded to refrain from use of makeup or any other skin care products that leaves residue (grease) when wearing N95 respirators. This is necessary to ensure proper sterilization and reuse of these items.

Plastic eye protection is also eligible for sterilization and reuse. This includes face shields and eye wear. Damaged eye protection and/or scratched lenses will not be reprocessed.

Collection of Items

To support the collection, health regions and sites are required to establish a dedicated bin for N95 respirators and another for plastic eye protection. Bins should be located in each area where these supplies are to be collected. Bins should have a lid and be able to be disinfected.

Interim process

1. Ensure the bins are labeled as “SOILED” and labeled with the PPE type (“N95” or “EYE WEAR”) to be collected.
2. Disinfect the bin and lid and place in a designated location in each area. NOTE: designated location cannot be in a patient room.
3. Line the inside of the bin with a heavy-duty plastic bag marked as “SOILED”.
4. Lightly used PPE may be placed in the bins. Soiled, wet, damp, or stained respirators or damaged eye protection should not be collected in these bins. NOTE: collect used N95s separately from used eye protection.
5. Once the bins are full, securely tie the bag and immediately move it to the designated “dirty” area in the facility while not handling any other soiled items. Do not allow soiled items to come close to your body without wearing appropriate PPE.
6. All used N95 respirators and eye protection must be secured in a locked location.
7. Disinfect the bin surfaces and line with a new heavy-duty plastic bag. Repeat the process as bins fill.