

COVID-19

Guidance on the Removal, Storage and Extended Wear of Medical Face Masks in Green Zones

Please note: **This guidance is a deviation** from usual IP&C Routine Practices and Additional Precautions.

PPE is only one element of Routine Practices, and must be used in conjunction with other routine practices to protect the healthcare worker, such as:

- Strict adherence to the four moments of hand hygiene
- Physical (social) distancing
- Respiratory hygiene
- Staying home if you are ill*

**Note: The masking strategy is intended to prevent transmission from asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic health care workers. If a health care worker shows signs of illness they must be excluded from duty.*

This document only addresses donning and doffing (putting on and taking off) a face mask as well as eye/face protection. It does not cover the procedures for donning and doffing other forms of PPE. If your point of care risk assessment (PCRA) and/or the Provincial PPE Requirements indicate other PPE should be used for a task, please refer to [PPE Instructional Resources](#) for guidance on safely putting on and taking off other PPE.

A policy of masking for the full duration of shifts is one strategy aimed at protecting staff and patients while trying to conserve supplies of PPE

This document should be used to instruct users on the necessary steps to safely remove, store and reuse a face mask where extended use is indicated. **This guideline cannot be used as guidance for N95s.**

Definitions

Alcohol Based hand Rub (ABHR) is a waterless hand sanitizer that contains between 60-90% alcohol

Extended use is the continuous wearing of an item of PPE between patients, e.g. without removal between patients

Meticulous hand hygiene refers to doing hand hygiene thoroughly and carefully ensuring all parts of the hands including wrists are cleaned with either ABHR or soap and water









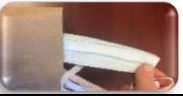



Medical Face Mask is a term used to refer to either procedure or surgical masks being used as part of the Provincial Personal Protective Equipment Requirements

Reuse refers to the practice of doffing a piece of equipment, storing it securely, and re-donning it during the same shift in accordance with an SOP

IMPORTANT POINTS

- **ALWAYS** perform strict hand hygiene **BEFORE and AFTER** donning/doffing PPE
- Remove eye protection (if using) and disinfect as per Shared Health guidelines
- *Move slowly and thoughtfully*
- Inspect the mask for any damage or soiling (stains, body fluids, wetness) prior to storage
- Label the paper bag with your name so it can be easily identified as yours. A paper envelope is acceptable to use if paper bag is not available. Ziploc™ or other plastic bags cannot be used for storage.
- Once the mask is stored (in a paper bag, envelop etc) place it in an area where it cannot be crushed or otherwise damaged (e.g. locker, cupboard, inside a file folder – file folder can be reused multiple times).


DOFFING AND STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Mask with Loops			
1.	Perform meticulous hand hygiene		
2.	Remove mask by using the ear loops at the back of the ears		
3.	Gently, stretch ear-loops to flatten mask, try to avoid touching the very front part of the mask		
4.	Using ear loops, bring top (nosepiece) and bottom ends of mask together to fold mask lengthwise with outer (patient facing) side in on itself		
5.	Hold with one hand by ear-loop <i>Can touch the very edge if needed to keep mask folded</i>		
6.	With other hand open paper bag/envelope <i>When using bag, slightly open top leaving the bottom of the bag still folded</i>	Paper Bag	Envelope <small>(only use if paper bag not available)</small>
7.	Carefully place folded mask in a clean and dry paper bag <i>If using envelope, rotate mask so the open end (nosepiece end) is facing downward</i>		
8.	Close paper bag, ensuring ear loops are inside the bag as shown <i>If using an envelope strive to keep a piece of the ear loop out as shown</i>		
9.	Perform meticulous hand hygiene		
Mask with Ties			
1.	Perform meticulous hand hygiene		
2.	Remove mask by using ties Untie at base of the neck first and then at the back of the head, remove mask using the top set of ties		
3.	Holding the ties of the mask carefully fold the mask in half lengthwise from top to bottom (can touch the very edge if needed to hold the mask so it stays folded) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not put mask down on surface to fold Fold the outer (patient facing) side in on itself Once folded in half the part of the mask that touches you (the user) should be on the outside (do not make a firm fold – no creasing) <i>To avoid contamination, hold all four ties in one hand and open the paper bag with the other hand</i>		
4.	With other hand open paper bag/envelope <i>When using paper bag, slightly open top leaving the bottom of the bag still folded</i>	Paper Bag	Envelope <small>(only use if paper bag not available)</small>
5.	Carefully place folded mask in a clean and dry paper bag <i>If using envelope, rotate mask so the open end (nosepiece end) is facing upward</i>		
6.	Strive to keep ties out of the envelope/paper bag as shown		

7. **Perform meticulous hand hygiene**

Re-Donning Instructions

1.	Perform meticulous hand hygiene
2.	Carefully remove mask from the bag and/or envelope using loops or ties
	
3.	Following IP&C guidelines, apply mask (user facing side towards you)
	
	
4.	Discard paper bag and/or envelope. Do not save bag for re-use during another break
5.	Perform meticulous hand hygiene

6.	Put on eye protection as per IP&C guidelines 
7.	Perform meticulous hand hygiene

When to remove your mask

- For breaks
- Prior to – and during - eating a meal
- Remember to use social distancing when not wearing a mask (stay 2 metres/6 feet from others)

When to discard your mask

- At the end of your shift
- When it is visibly soiled
- When it becomes damp (sweat, humidity from breathing)
- When you have touched the front of your mask
- If the mask comes in direct contact with a patient
- When you have been directly exposed to respiratory droplets (someone has coughed or sneezed into your face). NOTE: this may not be an issue if you were wearing a full-face shield at the time