

Western Health COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Quick Reference Guide 6.3.2023



Key Changes

Version Number	Date	Changes
11	6 th March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Change to base-level PPE requirements
10	1 st December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reformat and restructure. Tier language removed. COVID-19 Risk levels removed.Gown and glove use (Contact precautions) no longer required for SCOVID and COVID patient care, except as per 'Standard' precautions – when risk of contamination from blood and body fluid including respiratory secretions is anticipatedNew terminology – 'Respiratory transmission-based precautions' to replace both airborne and droplet meaning only P2/N95 and eye protection used as the required PPERemoval of reference to pandemic orders
9.10	9 th June 2021	

Purpose

To provide staff with current effective and safe use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance during the COVID-19 response.

Appropriate and correct use of PPE provides protection to both staff and patients, to prevent onward transmission to others in healthcare facilities.

For further guidance on appropriate PPE use for COVID-19 and tuberculosis, measles, chickenpox, disseminated shingles, other respiratory viruses, carbapenemase producing organisms, *Candida auris* and infective gastroenteritis refer to Appendix A – PPE Matrix for Non-COVID-19 settings.

Target Audience

This guideline is relevant to all Western Health staff, with no exceptions.

Context

This QRG is written to provide the minimum PPE requirements for the protection for healthcare workers caring for patients with suspected (SCOVID) or confirmed COVID-19 patients.

COVID-19 is predominately transmitted via inhalation of aerosols that can be short-range or long-range transmission. Transmission via direct contact of infectious material or fomites onto mucous membranes is possible but not common. As such, gloves and long-sleeved gowns are no longer required for all SCOVID or COVID patient care except as part of 'Standard' precautions.

'Standard' precautions are required for all patient care whereby there is a risk of contamination from blood and body fluid, including respiratory secretions to the healthcare worker. In this instance, bare below the elbow, plastic apron, gloves, eye protection must be worn in conjunction with N95 respirator mask for SCOVID and COVID patients.

SCOVID or COVID patients with additional infectious risks such as infectious diarrhoea, multi-drug resistant organisms (VRE, ESBL and MRSA) with risk factors or those with CPO or *Candida auris* require additional 'Contact' transmission-based precautions to be implemented.

Hand hygiene must never be compromised when using PPE and all staff must comply with the 5 Moments of hand hygiene.

- Hand hygiene must be performed prior to donning PPE
- Hand hygiene must be performed after removing each individual item of PPE

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Western Health PPE Guidance

Given the ongoing risks from COVID-19 in our local area, Western Health takes a proactive risk mitigation approach to mask wearing for staff, patient, and visitor protection. Department of Health guidance provides the **minimum** PPE requirement guidance which allows organisations to implement their own guidance based on local risk assessment. This may vary from organisation to organisation based on their local catchment areas community COVID-19 prevalence and risk assessment.

Routine patient care that does not have identified COVID-19 or 'Respiratory' infectious risk transmission-based precautions

All clinical settings and residential aged care at Western Health are required to wear as a **minimum a surgical mask** (P2/N95 respirator mask is preferred).

Routine patient care in high risk areas (Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Units, Dialysis departments and Oncology departments)

All high risk departments at Western Health (specifically Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Units, Dialysis departments and Oncology departments) are required to wear as a **minimum a P2/N95 respirator mask** which staff 'fit check' each time applied.

Refer to Table 1 for additional requirements as per standard precautions and those patients requiring contact transmission-based precautions.

Routine patient care when COVID-19 risk has been identified or requires 'Respiratory' infectious transmission-based precautions

For all patients requiring 'Respiratory' transmission-based precautions including SCOVID and COVID, all staff are required to wear as the **minimum a P2/N95 respirator mask** which staff 'fit check' each time applied, and eye protection as outlined in Table 1. Plastic apron or long-sleeved gown and gloves are worn only as per 'standard' precautions or if there is an infectious risk requiring 'contact' transmission-based precautions.

When single rooms are utilised for such patients or patients are cohorted in twin or four-bed bays the doors must always remain closed thus creating a dedicated zone within a ward with air purifier in place and ventilation hoods in use. 'Respiratory' transmission-based precautions poster must be placed on door. Refer to [COVID Zoning](#) on the Coronavirus microsite (PPE) and [Creating COVID Zones in the acute care setting QRG](#)

Public areas, non-clinical areas and office areas

There are **no mask requirements** within public areas, non-clinical areas and office areas.

Respiratory protection program

Staff members who are required to wear respirator masks should be fit tested and fit checked as per Western Health's [Respiratory Protection Program Guideline](#) Fit checking must be undertaken with each donning of a respiratory mask regardless of being fit tested – [Principles of Fit Checking QRG](#)

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Table 1: Transmission Based Precautions and the Minimum PPE to be utilised

PPE Recommendations	Hand hygiene, bare below elbow	P2 / N95 respirator	Eye protection - face shield (preferred) or safety goggles	McMonty Hood / Air Purifier	Disposable gloves	Single use plastic apron	long sleeved isolation gown
SCoVID/COVID-19 Respiratory Precautions AND Influenza-like illness, other respiratory viruses, mumps, rubella, measles, chickenpox, disseminated shingles and TB	✓	✓	✓	✓	As per Standard Precautions. Gloves do not negate the need for hand hygiene.	STANDARD PRECAUTIONS If contact likely between clothing and patient, surrounding environment or bodily fluids. OR If copious blood or bodily fluids. including from respiratory secretions	
High risk departments (specifically Emergency Departments, Intensive Care Units, Dialysis departments and Oncology departments)	✓	✓	✓	✗	As per Standard Precautions. Gloves do not negate the need for hand hygiene.	STANDARD PRECAUTIONS If contact likely between clothing and patient, surrounding environment or bodily fluids. OR If copious blood or bodily fluids. including from respiratory secretions	
Patients with nil COVID-19 risks NOR infectious diseases requiring respiratory precautions	✓	✗ Surgical mask required as a minimum. Follow Standard Precautions	✓ As per Standard Precautions, AGPs and AGBs.	✗	As per Standard Precautions. Gloves do not negate the need for hand hygiene.	✓ Standard Precautions including from respiratory secretions. OR patients with VRE, ESBL or MRSA with NIL risk factors	✓ Contact Precautions CPO, Candida auris, VRE, ESBL & MRSA with risk factors, infectious diarrhoea, Shingles (unable to be covered)
Public, non-clinical and office areas	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗

Hand hygiene should not be compromised by PPE use, including glove usage before and after use

Standard precautions apply in all settings and all circumstances:

- Gowns/plastic aprons and gloves should also be worn in all circumstances when a risk assessment indicates potential for exposure to blood or body fluid including respiratory secretions, for example in symptomatic patients or aerosol generating behaviours (AGB) or aerosol generating procedures (AGP)
- Long-sleeved gown may offer higher level protection

Refer to **COVID-19 testing criteria, risk categorisation, de-isolation, and bed allocation guidelines** - 'Standard Cohorting Matrix' table for all infectious patients to assist in prioritisation of use for negative pressure rooms, single rooms with McMonty Hood/air purifiers, single room with own bathroom.

Refer to Infection Prevention - Standard and Transmission Based Precautions procedure for additional guidance