

AHS PPE Taskforce Guidance

Topic: Bringing My Own PPE to Work

Date: January 21, 2022

Protection of our staff, physicians and volunteers from exposure to COVID-19 at work is our priority at AHS. The Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) is a fundamental component of every single patient interaction. On the basis of this PCRA, we support the decisions of our frontline staff and physicians to choose personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to the risk and planned healthcare interventions. Modified respiratory precautions are recommended for interactions with individuals confirmed or potentially infected with COVID-19.

Guidance from the AHS PPE Task Force

AHS has sufficient PPE supplies to support the COVID-19 pandemic. PPE supplies sourced through AHS channels are safe and compliant with all relevant standards, so as to optimally protect our front line staff.

Due to concerns about safety and compliance with health care standards, we ask you to not introduce outside PPE into care environments. We are aware of the development of opportunistic entities that are providing very poor quality PPE supplies, in an attempt to capitalize on concerns about PPE availability. To ensure you are properly protected, please use the PPE supplied by AHS in AHS facilities.

Another important issue to consider is that much of the PPE being sold (such as Respirators) is designed and intended for industrial use rather than for healthcare use. As such, there may not be instructions for cleaning or disinfecting the devices, and no reliable way to do this. This may result in contaminated articles of PPE that are reused and that act as a source of infection for the user, rather than protecting them. Again, to ensure you are properly protected, please use the PPE supplied by AHS in AHS facilities. The availability of appropriate PPE, in keeping with a professional's point of care risk assessment, is of paramount concern to AHS and to all care providers. AHS is well positioned to meet this need.

When is it acceptable to bring my own PPE to work?

Non-medical (cloth) masks

In administrative settings, workers with no direct patient contact or patient items are required to wear a mask continuously in all areas of their workplace where they cannot maintain adequate physical distancing. Workers in these areas can choose to wear their own non-medical (e.g. cloth) mask. When choosing a non-medical (cloth) mask, the best option is a triple layer mask, as described by the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Canada.

For specific guidance on continuous masking in healthcare and administrative areas, see the [AHS Guidelines for Continuous Masking](#). If there are specific concerns please contact PPE@ahs.ca.

Eye protection

AHS supplied eye protection will continue to be readily available to all frontline staff throughout the province and includes disposable face shields, mask/face shield combinations, or reusable goggles, safety glasses or reusable face shields. Individuals may be permitted to bring their own prescription or non-prescription eye protection, provided it meets AHS Infection Prevention Control (IPC) specifications.

Prescription eye protection

Workers may purchase prescription eye protection (e.g. safety glasses or goggles) for comfort reasons if the prescription eye protection serves the function of both prescription glasses and eye protection. Regular prescription glasses do not meet Workplace Health and Safety regulations for eye protection.

Prescription eye protection must meet these criteria:

- Equivalent to AHS supplied eye protection:
 - Eyewear is intended for use in a healthcare setting to protect the eyes from droplet exposure (eyes are protected from small particles by fitting closely to face at top/brow area and both sides).
 - Eyewear meets CSA and/or ANSI 87.1 standards for personal protective equipment.
- Eyewear cleaning instructions indicate disinfectants can be safely used to clean and disinfect the eye protection. Please note that use of AHS disinfectants may result in degradation of equipment over time. In addition disinfectants may leave a film on lenses requiring a water rinse. AHS is not responsible for replacement or repair of personal prescription eyewear due to disinfection use.

Workers are responsible for the cost, cleaning and disinfection of prescription eye protection, in accordance with IPC routine practices or IPC PPE matrix for specific areas or roles.

Follow [IPC COVID-19 PPE Recommendation for the Preservation and Reuse of Eye Protection](#) when using personal prescription eye protection.

Non-prescription eye protection

AHS supplied eye protection (e.g. safety glasses or goggles) should be worn whenever possible. Units, sites and clinics are to have adequate, safe PPE on hand for staff as well as others who may be on the unit such as physicians, specialist and lab services. Workers need to know the location of PPE in all areas they work in. Please work with your manager to find ways to make AHS supplied eye protection (non-prescription) work for you.

Workers may purchase their own non-prescription eye protection (e.g. safety glasses or goggles) for comfort reasons, if the eye protection meets the requirements of protective

eyewear to be worn in healthcare settings. This eyewear is to be dedicated to one worker, not shared or distributed to others in AHS.

Eye protection must meet these criteria:

- Equivalent to AHS supplied eye protection.
 - Eyewear is intended for use in a healthcare setting to protect the eyes from droplet exposure (eyes are protected from small particles by fitting closely to face at top/brow area and both sides).
 - Eyewear meets CSA and/or ANSI 87.1 standards for personal protective equipment.
- Eyewear cleaning instructions indicate disinfectants can be safely used to clean and disinfect the eye protection. Please note that use of AHS disinfectants may result in degradation of equipment over time. In addition disinfectants may leave a film on lenses requiring a water rinse. AHS is not responsible for replacement or repair of personal prescription eyewear due to disinfection use.

Workers who choose to bring in their own eye protection (non-prescription) rather than using AHS supplied eye protection are responsible for the cost, cleaning and disinfection of eye protection. This is in accordance with IPC routine practices or IPC PPE matrix for specific areas or roles.

Follow [IPC COVID-19 PPE Recommendation for the Preservation and Reuse of Eye Protection](#) when using personal prescription eye protection.