

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) IN HOMELESSNESS SERVICE SETTINGS

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) consists of gowns, gloves, masks, facial protection, and respirators, which can be used to provide a barrier to help prevent potential exposure to infectious disease, including COVID-19. Routine practices, such as hand hygiene and using PPE, will help lessen transmission and should be incorporated in homelessness service settings including shelter isolation and quarantine sites. This CAEH COVID-19 Resource provides consolidated information on the types of PPE required, how to properly use PPE, where to source PPE, and how to manage and conserve PPE.

Use of PPE in Homelessness Service Settings

In ideal circumstances, PPE should be available for both staff and clients in shelter isolation and quarantine settings. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advises [outreach staff](#) to wear face coverings while [physical distancing](#) and gloves if they are available. Staff providing healthcare in during outreach or in isolation settings should follow [infection control guidelines](#) for healthcare professionals. Guidelines for the type of PPE required, depending on work placements, interactions, and COVID-19 status, have been developed and shared by numerous organizations:

- Community Solutions, [Personal Protective Equipment and Staff Safety in Isolation and Quarantine Settings](#) (answers 13 commonly asked questions and provides related resources)
- York Region, [Infection Prevention and Control Summary of Recommendations for use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 in Emergency Housing Service Settings](#) (pg. 3-5)
- Alberta Health Services, [Shelter Guidance: Preventing, Controlling, and Managing COVID-19](#) (pg. 23)

Masks

There are [three types of masks](#): N95 respirators; Medical masks (surgical masks), and; Non-medical masks (homemade masks). Community Solutions developed guidelines for those working in shelter isolation and quarantine settings to help determine [whether a facemask or a respirator should be used](#).

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) recommends wearing a [non-medical face mask](#) as an additional measure to protect individuals in situations where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. However, it is important to understand that non-medical masks and face coverings have limitations. Review the Government of Canada's [appropriate use of non-medical masks](#) and how to protect others before using them in homelessness service settings.

Proper Use of PPE

Training in the proper use of PPE must be provided to all staff who have the potential to be exposed to COVID-19. Contact your local health authority to find out how to access training in your community. The following may supplement training or serve as reminders after training has been completed:

Putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) PPE

- BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), [5 Steps to Put On PPE](#) and [5 Steps to Take Off PPE](#) [posters]
- Public Health Ontario, [Recommended Steps for Putting On and Taking Off PPE](#) [poster]
- Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, [COVID-19 Guidance for Homeless Shelters](#) [video]
- Squadia.com, [Proper Way to Put on a Face Mask](#) [video]
- BC Centre for Disease Control, [How to Wear a Face Mask](#) [poster]

Eyes, facial protection, and gloves

- BCCDC, [Cleaning and Disinfection Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection](#) [poster]
- WorkSafe BC, [Glove Removal Procedure](#) [poster]
- CDC, [Gloves are not Enough](#) [Poster]

Sourcing PPE

In June 2020, the Government of Canada developed a [hub of PPE resources](#) to help organizations buy and sell PPE, including a list of [PPE suppliers by province](#) and initiatives that connect [requests and offers](#). Some organizations have organized a PPE Drive to encourage businesses and individuals to donate unopened PPE that has not expired, [print 3D face visors](#), [sew masks](#), or donate funds. See Texas Medical Association's [How to Organize a PPE Drive](#) for key considerations in establishing a drive.

Managing and Conserving PPE

The unprecedented demand and urgent need for PPE has made managing and conserving PPE challenging. CDC's [PPE Burn Rate Calculator](#) has been developed to help organizations plan and optimize the use of PPE. Several resources are available to provide guidance on managing and conserving PPE:

- Community Solutions, [Personal Protective Equipment and Staff Safety in Isolation and Quarantine Settings](#) [see: "How should staff operate with a limited supply of PPE?"]
- JAMA Network, [Sourcing PPE During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) [see: Box. Summary of Recommendations for PPE Conservation and Management]
- BCCDC, [COVID-19: Emergency Prioritization in a Pandemic PPE Allocation Framework](#)

Disclaimer: This document is a collection of resources and/or ideas compiled by the team at CAEH. Please follow [Public Health Agency of Canada guidelines on COVID-19](#) as the primary resource for all health-related concerns.

CAEH will continue to update this resource as new information or ideas become available. Please refer to the CNH3 website Resources page at cnh3.ca/resources for additional information. If you have an idea or resource to share or are seeking further support, please contact us at info@caeh.ca.