



# PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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## Matching Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to Exposure Risk

For most types of workers, the risk of infection with COVID-19 is similar to that of the general public. Workers whose jobs do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with COVID-19, nor frequent close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) the general public are at lower risk of occupational exposure.

However, certain behavioral health workers are likely to perform job duties that involve medium, high, or very high occupational exposure risks. Behavioral health workers' job duties affect their level of occupational risk, which may change as workers take on different tasks within their positions.

The federal government's interim guidance for specific worker groups, and their employers, includes recommended PPE ensembles for various types of activities that workers will perform. For information on determining worker risk and use of appropriate PPE please visit:

[https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/hazardrecognition.html#risk\\_classification](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/hazardrecognition.html#risk_classification)

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>

## PPE Contingency Strategies

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that all U.S. healthcare facilities begin using PPE contingency strategies, which include:

- Maximizing the use of engineering controls, such as physical barriers physical barriers or partitions in waiting rooms, and well-maintained ventilation systems.
- Maximizing use of administrative controls, such as altering work practices to minimize patient contacts. Utilization of telehealth, whenever possible, is an appropriate administrative control. Other administrative controls may include:
  - Estimate your facilities PPE "burn rate." [The Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Burn Rate Calculator excel icon\[3 sheets\]](#) is a spreadsheet-based model that will help healthcare facilities plan and optimize the use of PPE for response to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
  - Use re-usable PPE that can be reprocessed.
  - Use PPE beyond the manufacturer-designated shelf life for training.

## Strategies for Managing in a PPE Shortage

**A health care facility that is experiencing PPE shortages** may need to consider crisis capacity strategies, which must be carefully planned before implementation. The effectiveness of utilizing crisis strategies is uncertain and they may pose a risk for transmission between HCP and patients. More information on PPE crisis strategies and extending the use of PPE can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>.

## **Correct Use of Available PPE**

**Correct use of available PPE** is critical to minimize risk of COVID-19 spread.

These pages provide guidance on PPE recommended to minimize chances of exposure

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html>

And instructions for the proper use of PPE

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>

This short video provides a demonstration of appropriate donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) of various types of PPE which are commonly used in behavioral health settings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwPWdkbyizw>

This video is about how to properly use and re-use a mask.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwPWdkbyizw>

This video is about applying and removing sterile gloves.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIrqilC3YmY>

## **Other Helpful Resources**

Other resources on appropriate use of PPE and guidance to employers on PPE can be found below:

- <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control.html>