

# COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Response and escalation framework

## Escalation Principles

### Background

The following are general principles which will assist Local Health Districts (LHDs) and Specialty Health Networks (SHNs) in managing the changing risk and guiding the appropriate response. A key focus during escalation is the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including surgical masks in response to the level of community transmission. Continual Risk assessment of patients should apply in all care settings

### General principles – apply to all settings and all scenarios

The fundamental principles of infection prevention and control must be applied across all settings at all times. These principles apply across all scenarios and are not outlined in detail in the tables below but are listed here:

- 1) Administrative and engineering controls as per Infection Prevention
- 2) Physical distancing
- 3) Standard precautions for all healthcare interactions
- 4) Hand hygiene
- 5) Enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces
- 6) Ensure relevant staff have completed donning and doffing and “fit checking” assessment
- 7) Ensure there is on-site, readily available testing for staff
- 8) Health workers (HWs) to stay at home if they are unwell
- 9) Entry screening for visitors and staff as per [NSW Health guidelines](#)

### Application of risks

During situations of increased risk, it is important to be able to escalate the infection prevention and control precautions to align with the risk of community transmission and onward spread. Risk may change based on geographical locations of spread. Changes to risk of COVID-19 can be based on the identification of transmission in key areas:

1. Geographic clusters
2. Level of Community Transmission
3. Local Health District/Local Government Area/State

Authorisation for an escalation of risk should be based on direction from PHEOC and the Clinical Excellence Commission, [NSW COVID-19 cases statistics - Local COVID-19 transmission in the last two weeks](#)

### Risk Matrix Model

LOW RISK	MODERATE RISK	HIGH RISK
Standard Precautions Transmission based Precautions based on risk assessment	Escalate PPE controls, mask use for all HWs providing care within 1.5m in addition to standard precautions Patients & visitors to wear masks on presentation and during transit	Escalate PPE controls Universal mask use by HWs Patients & visitors to wear masks on presentation and during transit

	LOW TRANSMISSION	MODERATE TRANSMISSION	HIGH TRANSMISSION
<b>Patients</b>			
All patients in Hospital	Standard precautions	All patients to wear a surgical mask on presentation and during transit if possible Manage in single room where possible	All patients to wear a surgical mask on presentation and during transit if possible Manage sickest patients in a single room or cohort if no single rooms available (pending result of COVID testing)
Presenting directly to Emergency Department, Labour Ward, Medical Imaging, outpatients, rehab groups and community health services	Standard precautions Patients to wear a mask only if acute respiratory illness (ARI) suspected or confirmed	All patients to wear a surgical mask if possible, on presentation and during transit if possible. Mask to remain insitu if in open areas or if unable to maintain physical distance.	All patients to wear a surgical mask on presentation and during transit if possible
Home and community-based care	Standard precautions	All patients, and other people attending the appointment, to wear a surgical mask when receiving care if possible	All patients to wear a surgical mask when receiving care if possible
Maternity & Paediatric Patients	Mother and baby to stay together Children 12yrs and under are not required to wear a mask		
<b>Health workers:</b>			
Providing care within 1.5m of patients/clients	Standard precautions Physical distancing to apply at all staff breaks	All staff to wear surgical mask in addition to standard precautions Physical distancing to apply at all staff breaks <b>HWs to follow contact and droplet precautions</b> if suspected/confirmed <b>COVID-19</b> <b>Airborne</b> precautions for all aerosol generating procedures ( <b>AGPs</b> ) for patients with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 or ARI	<b>HWs to follow contact and droplet precautions</b>  <b>Airborne</b> precautions for all <b>AGPs</b> Physical distancing to apply at all staff breaks
No contact within 1.5m of patients/clients	Standard precautions	Standard precautions	Surgical masks
<b>Visitors:</b>			
All visitors	Standard precautions	Visitors, including carers and family, must wear a mask before entering the facility (own mask or provided by the facility)	Reduce visitors to essential only

**Note: Although these principles apply across healthcare environments when caring for vulnerable patients/residents, individual circumstances should be considered.**