

# Emergency Department – COVID-19 PPE Quick Reference Guide

This is the quick reference guide for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) use in Emergency Departments.

Any variation to this guidance must be based on local risk assessment and made in conjunction with facility management, local infectious diseases physician, public health unit, infection prevention and control and advice from the Clinical Excellence Commission. The risk levels must be checked against the [NSW Health Risk Monitoring Dashboard](#). Refer to the [CEC COVID-19 web pages](#) for more information.



STANDARD PRECAUTIONS		
Used for all patient care. PPE use based on risk of anticipated exposure to blood or body substances. Consider physical distancing greater than 1.5m where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand Hygiene</li> <li>• Aseptic technique</li> <li>• Cleaning and disinfection of shared equipment and surfaces</li> <li>• BBE<sup>a</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette</li> <li>• Safe handling of sharps</li> <li>• Waste disposal – correct waste streams</li> <li>• Safe handling of linen</li> </ul>
CONTACT PRECAUTIONS		
Used when contact with pathogenic organisms spread by direct or indirect contact. Combine with STANDARD PRECAUTIONS (SP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impervious apron or gown</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposable gloves when in contact with the patient or their immediate environment or performing procedures (SP)</li> </ul>
DROPLET PRECAUTIONS		
Used when infectious particles are transmitted by respiratory droplets. Providing care (within 1.5m) for ARI <sup>b</sup> patients. Combine with SP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surgical mask</li> <li>• Eye protection (face shield/safety goggles)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposable gloves when in contact with patient or their immediate environment or performing procedures (SP).</li> <li>• Plastic apron or impervious isolation gown (SP)</li> </ul>
AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS		
Used when infectious particles are transmitted by airborne route. Providing direct care for patients suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or when conducting an AGP <sup>d</sup> on patients with ARI  CONTACT and AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS + EYE PROTECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P2/N95 respirator + fit checking<sup>c</sup></li> <li>• Eye protection (face shield/safety glasses or goggles)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disposable gloves when in contact with patient or their immediate environment or performing procedures (SP)</li> <li>• Plastic apron or impervious isolation gown (SP)</li> </ul>

- Bare below the elbows, hair short or tied back
- ARI - Acute respiratory infection
- Risk assessment of facial hair and fit checking of P2/N95 respirator
- Aerosol Generating Procedure

Document information			
Version	6.0	Consultation	ED Community of Practice
Revision	Aug 2022		IPAC Community of Practice
Developed by	CEC		ACI
Endorsed by	Nigel Lyons		CEC
First published	2020		
Reviewed by	CEC	For use by	ED staff

# COVID-19 PPE use at Different Transmission Levels within ED

The appropriate PPE (mask/respirator, eye protection, apron/gown, gloves) should be selected by Health Worker (HW) as per risk assessment or as directed by their department/hospital management and infection prevention and control team.

RISK LEVEL (see next page)	LOW (GREEN ALERT) TRANSMISSION	LOW TO MODERATE (YELLOW ALERT) TRANSMISSION	MODERATE (AMBER ALERT) TRANSMISSION	HIGH (RED ALERT) TRANSMISSION
 <p>When interacting with a patient with <b>LOW PROBABILITY</b> of COVID-19 infection (i.e no fever, no respiratory symptoms, no close contact with a confirmed case).</p>	<p><b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS +</b></p> <p>HWs in ED to wear surgical masks in clinical areas during patient care.</p> <p>HW to wear a surgical mask and eye protection when providing care for patients with an ARI</p>	<p><b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS +</b></p> <p>HWs in ED to wear surgical masks in clinical areas during patient care. Eye protection to be used when providing clinical care for patients with an ARI (within 1.5m)</p>	<p><b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS +</b></p> <p>HWs to wear surgical mask and eye protection within the clinical area</p>	<p><b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS +</b></p> <p>All ED HWs to wear P2/N95 respirators and eye protection in clinical areas when providing direct care</p>
 <p>When interacting with a patient suspected or confirmed with COVID-19, including patients with undiagnosed ARI symptoms.</p>	<p><b>CONTACT and AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS + EYE PROTECTION</b></p>			

**Vulnerable HWs:** HWs should be individually risk assessed to determine their suitability for clinical areas.

Refer to [CDNA COVID-19 SoNG](#) for COVID-19 epidemiological evidence

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# Table 3 Risk Matrix

**Green Alert**  
Low transmission risk

**Yellow Alert**  
Low to moderate transmission risk

**Amber Alert**  
Moderate to high transmission risk

**Red Alert**  
High transmission risk

Risk assessment of cases and community transmission will be determined by the [Risk Escalation Review Panel](#)

Standard precautions apply at all times – transmission-based precautions apply as required

**Hand hygiene and physical distancing always apply**

- All patients with an ARI to wear a mask on presentation and transit if able
- HWs managing suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients to wear P2/N95 respirator and eye protection
- Testing of symptomatic patients and HWs
- HWs in ED to wear surgical masks in clinical areas during patient care
- Eye protection to be used when providing clinical care for patients with an ARI (within 1.5m)
- Routine Cleaning

- All patients with an acute ARI to wear a mask on presentation and transit if able
- HWs managing suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients to wear P2/N95 respirator and eye protection
- Testing of symptomatic patients and HWs
- HWs in ED to wear surgical masks in clinical areas during patient care
- Eye protection to be used when providing clinical care for patients with an ARI (within 1.5m)
- Enhanced cleaning of high touch points, shared toilet, and shower facilities





































- All patients on admission and during transit to wear a mask if able
- HWs managing suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients to wear P2/N95 respirator and eye protection
- Risk screening of all patients for symptoms, increased testing
- Symptomatic and selected surveillance testing of patients and HWs
- Surgical masks and eye protection to be worn in ED and other clinical areas for all patients when providing clinical care
- Surgical mask for HWs in non-clinical area and shared spaces (e.g., on entry, corridors, office spaces)
- Enhanced cleaning of high touch points, shared toilet, and shower facilities

- All patients on admission and during transit to wear a surgical mask if able
- HWs managing suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients to wear P2/N95 respirator and eye protection
- Screening of all patients for symptoms, consider testing all admissions including ED presentations
- Consider selected surveillance testing of some HWs
- All ED HWs to wear P2/N95 respirators and eye protection in clinical areas when providing direct care
- Universal surgical mask use by all HW within health facilities
- Enhanced cleaning of high touch points, shared toilet, and shower facilities



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# PPE SELECTION GUIDE

For use in	 Hand Hygiene	 Disposable gloves	 Disposable fluid repellent apron	 Disposable fluid repellent gown	 Surgical mask	 P2/N95 respirator	 Eye protection (safety glasses / face shield)
All staff in ED							
Screening staff at the front reception		As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions			
<b>Triage staff face to face contact</b>		As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions			
Pediatrics patients with undiagnosed ARI							
Adult patient with undiagnosed ARI			As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions			
Direct care for suspected or confirmed COVID-19							

**Extended PPE use:** International guidance states that surgical masks and P2/N95 respirators can be worn for not more than 4 hours. Once they are removed for clinical reasons or meal breaks, they must be discarded, and a new mask used. Extended/seasonally used masks and eye protection (single or reusable) are to be changed when moist, soiled or contaminated.

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