

# 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 [Response and Escalation Risk Matrix](#). 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 on patients with ARI.  CONTACT and AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS + EYE PROTECTION (Combine with SP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P2/N95 respirator (or higher) + 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

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# COVID-19 PPE use at Different Transmission Levels

The appropriate PPE (mask/respirator, eye protection, apron/gown, gloves) should be selected by 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	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> surgical masks when providing direct patient care</p>	<p><b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS +</b> HWs to wear surgical mask within the clinical area</p>	<p><b>STANDARD PRECAUTIONS +</b> Universal surgical mask use by all HWs when in the facility (all areas of the facility from entry until leaving)</p>
 <p>When interacting with a patient with <b>MODERATE PROBABILITY</b> of COVID-19 infection (i.e. fever and respiratory symptoms NO close contact with confirmed case).</p>	<p><b>CONTACT and DROPLET PRECAUTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>CONTACT and AIRBORNE PRECAUTIONS + EYE PROTECTION</b></p>	
 <p>When interacting with a patient with <b>HIGH PROBABILITY</b> of COVID-19 infection (i.e. suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or identified as a close contact).</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 and see [Latest COVID-19 case locations and alerts in NSW](#)

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## LOW (GREEN ALERT) TRANSMISSION

Standard precautions and transmission based precautions based on patient condition

- Screening and testing
- Physical distancing
- Standard Precautions
- Transmission Based Precautions
- Environmental Cleaning
- Monitoring and Surveillance
- Surgical mask for HW caring for patients
- Patients with ARI symptoms to wear mask on arrival to ED and transit if able

## MODERATE (AMBER ALERT) TRANSMISSION

Escalate PPE controls, mask use for all HWs in addition to standard precautions  
Patients & visitors to wear masks on entry

- Screening and testing
- Physical distancing
- Surgical mask for HW within clinical areas
- Standard Precautions
- Contact & Airborne Precautions (plus eye protection) for care of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients
- Enhanced Environmental Cleaning
- Monitoring and Surveillance
- Implementing COVID-19 care zones – if able to have zones
- Consider changes to service delivery
- Masks for patients and visitors on entry





































## HIGH (RED ALERT) TRANSMISSION

Escalate PPE controls\*  
Universal mask use by HWs  
Patients & visitors to wear masks on entry

- Screening and testing
- Physical distancing
- Surgical mask for HWs and visitors
- Patients to wear mask on arrival to ED and while outside room/ transit
- Contact and droplet precautions when providing direct patient care
- Standard Precautions
- Contact & Airborne Precautions (plus eye protection) for care of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients
- Enhanced environmental Cleaning
- Monitoring and Surveillance
- Implementing AND maintaining COVID-19 care zones
- Changes to service delivery
- Eye protection e.g. full face shield, goggles or safety glasses for staff in hot/ red zones

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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			
Pediatrics patients- ARI without COVID19 epidemiological risk		As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions			
Pediatrics patients- ARI with COVID19 epidemiological risk							
Adult patient - ARI without COVID19 epidemiological risk			As per standard precautions	As per standard precautions			
Direct care for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 OR Identified as a close contact by NSW Public Health Unit							

**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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