

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES CIRCULAR

Date: September 2, 2021

CIRCULAR NUMBER: 2021-21(r4) - COVID-19 (New information appears in bold.)

To: Child and Family Services Community Care Providers (Group Care)

Subject: Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for CFS Community Care Providers

Type: Policy

Procedure

Effective Date: Immediately

This circular provides guidance on the required use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for Child and Family Services (CFS) community care provider (CCP) group care staff and visitors. It also outlines the mask requirements in specific situations for CFS residents who can safely wear a mask. Please note that this circular does not deal with routine practices, only PPE requirements related to COVID-19.

On August 28, 2021, new public health orders went into effect that reinstated the requirement to wear masks in all indoor public spaces. While staff are not required to wear masks outdoors, they are recommended when physical distancing is not possible or considered unlikely. Eye protection for staff is optional for outdoors and indoor public spaces. However, staff must continue to wear PPE inside CCP facilities and while in transit as outlined in this circular.

The use of PPE is vital to lowering the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to a confirmed case. As a reminder, PPE use should always be combined with other protective measures, such as physical distancing, frequent hand hygiene, not touching ones' eyes, nose, or mouth, cough and sneeze etiquette and staying home when ill. In addition, staff must [self-screen](#) every day.

Definitions

“COVID-19 non-suspect” is a person who does not meet the criteria for testing and/or a person who was a confirmed COVID-19 case but has since been deemed “recovered” by Public Health or Infection Prevention and Control.

“COVID-19 suspect” is a person who has been tested and the result is pending OR those who, based on clinical symptoms and/or exposure history, need to be tested for COVID-19. Exposure history includes close contact in the last 14 days with a known COVID-19 case OR travel outside of Manitoba in the last 14 days.

“COVID-19 confirmed” is a person who has been tested, has a positive test result and who has not been deemed “recovered” by Public Health or Infection Prevention and Control.

“Indoors” means inside a group care facility, but does not include an “indoor public place” as defined by the Orders under The Public Health Act.

“Participant” is a person who resides in a CFS CCP group care setting.

“Staff” is a person who is employed by a CFS CCP to provide shift-staffed care in a group care setting. For the purpose of this circular, CCP clinicians, cultural workers and other supports are also considered staff, as are Department of Families staff who attend the facility.

“Visitor” is a person, other than a staff or other professional (e.g., department staff, clinician, cultural worker etc.) who visits a CFS CCP group care setting.

General PPE Requirements

In order for staff to safely provide services during the COVID-19 pandemic the department requires CFS CCP group care staff to wear PPE. The following general PPE requirements apply:

- **Medical masks:** Staff must wear a medical mask while indoors or while in transit. Staff must change their medical mask if it becomes wet, soiled or damaged and at breaks. Staff must perform hand hygiene prior to donning and after doffing medical masks.

Note: Participants must wear a medical mask if they can safely wear one when being transported by staff.

- **N95 masks:** Residential care staff can choose to wear a fitted N95 mask when providing direct care to individuals who are COVID-19 suspect or confirmed, or continue wearing a medical grade mask. An N95 mask may be used for an extended period of time for repeated interactions with multiple residents, but must be changed if wet, soiled, damaged and/or prior to breaks or meals. Staff must perform hand hygiene prior to donning and after doffing N95 masks.
- **Eye protection:** Staff must wear eye protection during each shift while indoors at the CCP facility or in transit, unless the staff is driving. Staff must not wear eye protection when driving. Protective eyewear must be worn over prescription glasses, if applicable. If eye protection needs to be removed for any reason, frames and lenses must be cleaned and disinfected and placed in a wipeable, disinfected container for reuse once dry. At the end of each shift, staff must discard lenses, and retain, clean and disinfect frames and place in a wipeable, disinfected container for their next shift once dry.
- **Gloves:** Staff must wear gloves at all times when providing direct care to a participant who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. Staff can stop wearing gloves once the participant’s [isolation/self-isolation](#) period is complete. Staff must change gloves between each participant interaction. Staff must perform hand hygiene prior to donning

and after doffing gloves. If the gloves become visibly soiled or torn when providing direct care, staff must discard the gloves immediately, perform hand hygiene and put on new gloves.

- **Gowns:** Staff must wear gowns at all times when providing direct care to a participant who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. Staff can stop wearing gowns once the participant's [isolation/self-isolation](#) period is complete. Staff must change gowns between each participant interaction. Staff must perform hand hygiene prior to donning and after doffing gowns. For disposable gowns, staff must discard their used gown in a garbage container when they leave the room of the confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case and prior to leaving the facility. For reusable gowns, staff must place gowns in a laundry hamper separate from other clothing after providing direct care to a participant and wash them separately from other clothing in hot, soapy water before reuse.

If a participant becomes a confirmed COVID-19 case, the department's Pandemic Response Nurses or Public Health will provide additional guidance regarding the appropriate use of PPE.

Staff must practice meticulous hand hygiene throughout their shift and when donning and doffing PPE. Please refer to Shared Health's instructional materials for [donning](#) and [doffing](#) and/or their videos for [donning](#) and [doffing](#). Staff should don/doff PPE in isolation from others.

PPE Use While in the Group Care Setting

Staff must wear medical masks and eye protection while indoors at CCP facilities. However, in addition to medical masks and eye protection, staff must also wear gloves and gowns when providing direct care to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. Staff also have the option of wearing a fitted N95 mask when providing care to suspect or confirmed COVID-19 cases.

The table below outlines the PPE requirements for staff while indoors at CCP facilities:

PPE	COVID-19 Non-Suspect	COVID-19 Suspect	COVID-19 Confirmed
Medical Mask	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eye Protection	Yes	Yes	Yes
N95 Mask	No	Optional	Optional
Gloves	No	Yes	Yes
Gowns	No	Yes	Yes

PPE Use While in Transit

Participants must wear a medical mask while in transit with staff if they can safely wear a mask.

Staff must wear medical masks and eye protection while in transit, except when the staff is driving. Staff who are driving must wear a medical mask, but must not wear eye protection. If staff who work in a group care setting are transporting a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case (e.g., from their home to a testing site), they can choose to wear a fitted N95 mask while in transit.

The table below outlines the PPE requirements for staff who are driving while in transit:

PPE	COVID-19 Non-Suspect	COVID-19 Suspect	COVID-19 Confirmed
Medical Mask	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eye Protection	No	No	No
N95 Mask	No	Optional	Optional
Gloves	No	No*	No*
Gowns	No	No*	No*

*If staff are going to have direct contact (i.e., physical contact) with the resident, they are required to wear gloves and gowns.

The table below outlines the PPE requirements for staff who are not driving while in transit:

PPE	COVID-19 Non-Suspect	COVID-19 Suspect	COVID-19 Confirmed
Medical Mask	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eye Protection	Yes	Yes	Yes
N95 Mask	No	Optional	Optional
Gloves	No	No*	No*
Gowns	No	No*	No*

*If staff are going to have direct contact (i.e., physical contact) with the resident, they are required to wear gloves and gowns.

PPE Use While Supporting Participants in Indoor Public Places

Staff must wear medical masks while supporting participants in indoor public places (e.g., malls, museums, stores, restaurants, etc.). Staff may also choose to wear eye protection (optional).

If staff are supporting a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case in an indoor public place (e.g., testing site or health care facility), they must wear eye protection and either a medical mask or a fitted N95 mask.

In accordance with the orders under the Public Health Act, participants must wear a mask in indoor public spaces if they can safely wear one. If participants are already wearing a medical mask because they were transported to the indoor public place by staff, they should continue to wear the medical mask. Otherwise, participants should wear a non-medical mask (e.g. cloth).

PPE Use While Outdoors

Staff are not required to wear PPE while supporting participants outdoors, unless they are outside for the purpose of transporting a participant in a vehicle. **However, it is recommended that staff wear medical masks while outdoors if physical distancing cannot be maintained or is unlikely to be maintained. Staff may also choose to wear eye protection outdoors (optional).**

If staff who work in a CCP facility are wearing an N95 mask because they are providing direct care to a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, they can continue to wear the N95 mask if they need to go outdoors (e.g., for the purposes of transporting a participant to a testing site).

The table below outlines PPE requirements for staff while outdoors:

PPE	COVID-19 Non-Suspect	COVID-19 Suspect	COVID-19 Confirmed
Medical Mask	No ¹	Yes	Yes
Eye Protection	Optional	Yes	Yes
N95 Mask	No	No	No
Gloves	No	No ²	No ²
Gowns	No	No ²	No ²

¹ **Recommended** if staff are likely to have direct physical contact with a participant.

² Required if staff are outside for the purpose of transporting a participant in a vehicle.

While not required by Public Health, staff and participants may choose to wear a non-medical (e.g. cloth) mask while outdoors.

PPE Use for Visitors

Visitors (other than essential CCP staff and Department staff) must wear a medical mask when visiting participants in a group care setting. Essential CCP staff and Department staff must wear a medical mask and protective eyewear when visiting indoors in a group care setting. In exceptional circumstances where a visit to a facility by an essential CCP staff or department staff with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case is permitted, the visitor will also be required to wear gloves and a gown.

Visitors are not required to wear PPE when visiting participants at a group care setting if the visit occurs outside. While not required by public health, visitors may choose to wear a non-medical (e.g. cloth) mask while outdoors.

More Information

Service providers must provide the required PPE for staff, participants and visitors as outlined in this circular. Please note that the department does not supply non-medical (e.g., cloth) masks.

If you have any COVID-19 questions related to this circular, please contact Gord Henwood by email at gord.henwood@gov.mb.ca or by phone at (204) 795-0460.

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cc: Distribution List

Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions Regarding N95 Mask Use

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1. When is the use of an N95 mask optional?

N95 masks are optional when providing direct care to an individual who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.

2. Why do I need to be fitted for an N95 mask?

An N95 mask needs to be fitted to your face to ensure a tight seal for an appropriate level of protection. Fitting for an N95 mask is required according to the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act. In the event you provide direct care to an individual who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, you will be able to wear an appropriately fitted N95 mask for your protection.

3. What does a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case mean?

COVID-19 suspect means a person who has been tested and the result is pending OR those who, based on clinical symptoms and/or exposure history, need to be tested for COVID-19. Exposure history includes close contact in the last 14 days with a known COVID-19 case OR travel outside of Manitoba in the last 14 days. COVID-19 confirmed means an individual has tested positive for the virus and is still isolating according to public health guidelines.

4. Can I continue to wear a medical mask instead of choosing an N95 mask?

Yes.

5. When can I request to use an N95 mask?

You will have the option of using an N95 mask when providing direct care to an individual who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. However, you need to be fitted for an N95 mask before having the option to wear one.

6. Can I reuse an N95 mask?

No. Staff must discard the N95 prior to breaks, meals, or if the mask becomes wet, damaged or soiled.

7. How can I access an N95 mask?

Once you have been fitted, the department will provide your employer with N95 masks that you can use when providing direct care to an individual who is a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case.