

AHS PPE Taskforce Guidance

Topic: Bringing My Own PPE to Work

Date: April 04, 2020

Protection of our staff, physicians and volunteers from exposure to COVID-19 at work is the #1 priority of AHS. The Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) is a fundamental component of every single patient interaction. On the basis of this PCRA, we support the decisions of our frontline staff and physicians to choose Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) appropriate to the risk and planned healthcare interventions. Droplet and Contact precautions are recommended for most interactions with individuals confirmed or potentially infected with COVID-19.

Question 1: Can I bring my own PPE to work?

Responsive Guidance from the AHS PPE Task Force:

AHS has sufficient PPE supplies to support the current and anticipated future care needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. PPE supplies sourced through AHS channels are known to be safe and compliant with all relevant standards, so as to optimally protect our front line staff.

Due to concerns about safety and compliance with health care standards, we ask that you not introduce outside PPE into care environments. Unfortunately, we are aware of the development of opportunistic entities that are providing very poor quality PPE supplies, in an attempt to capitalize on concerns about PPE availability. To ensure you are properly protected, please use the PPE supplied by AHS in AHS facilities.

Another important issue to consider is that much of the PPE being sold (such as Respirators) is designed and intended for industrial use. As they were never intended for healthcare use, there are no instructions for cleaning or disinfecting the devices, and no reliable way to do this. This may result in contaminated articles of PPE that are reused and that act as a source of infection for the user, rather than protecting them. Again, to ensure you are properly protected, please use the PPE supplied by AHS in AHS facilities.

Some authorities are recommending universal use of PPE, particularly medical masks or N95 respirators, in all public settings. It is vital that masks worn in public settings not be introduced into health care environments, as they represent a significant risk of potential inoculation during the doffing and handling phase.

The availability of appropriate PPE, in keeping with a professional's point of care risk assessment, is of paramount concern to AHS and to all care providers. AHS is well positioned to meet this need. If there are specific concerns please contact PPE@ahs.ca.