

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

Use and Conservation Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

There are currently shortages of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Your agency should consider taking steps to conserve your supply of PPE by:

- Only using PPE when necessary.
- Conserving necessary PPE through extended use and limited reuse.

PPE does not fully protect personnel from the risk of infection. Regardless of the situation, personnel should continue to follow general practices for infection control and prevention, such as maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people whenever possible and performing frequent hand hygiene with soap and water. If soap and water are not available and illicit drugs are **NOT** suspected to be present, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

The COVID-19 situation is constantly evolving, and your agency should monitor the CDC and Wisconsin DHS websites for the most current information and resources related to COVID-19. Your agency should review CDC's full guidance on [PPE optimization](#) for full details on extended use and limited reuse of PPE.

WHEN IS PPE NECESSARY?

Situation	PPE to Use
General work where social distance is maintained (in car, using phone, able to talk to general public from greater than 6-foot distance)	None
Work with general public where social distance cannot be maintained but physical contact is not required (close talking is required)	Surgical mask
Work requiring physical contact with well people.	Surgical mask, gloves
Work requiring physical contact with people who are ill.	Surgical mask, eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face). Gown or single-use coveralls, if possible.*

** If unable to wear gown or coveralls, clean and disinfect duty belt and gear prior to reuse using a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the product label, and follow standard operating procedures for containing and laundering clothes. Avoid shaking the clothes.*

HOW TO CONSERVE PPE THROUGH EXTENDED USE AND LIMITED REUSE

Per [CDC guidance](#) on strategies to optimize the supply of PPE, your agency might consider extended use and reuse of surgical masks and eye protection. Gloves and gowns/coveralls should not be reused or worn for an extended time. Extended use refers to wearing the same PPE for repeated close contact encounters with several different individuals without removing the PPE between encounters. Reuse refers to the practice of using the same PPE for multiple encounters with individuals but removing it between each of those encounters. The equipment is then safely stored between encounters. Your agency should develop clearly written procedures specific to their facility.



Facemasks with elastic ear hooks may be more suitable for reuse than facemasks that fasten via ties because masks that fasten via ties may not be able to be undone without tearing. For extended use and limited reuse of surgical masks, personnel should:

- Perform hand hygiene before and after taking off the used mask. Carefully fold the mask so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself to reduce contact with the outer surface during storage.
- Store the mask between uses in a clean sealable paper bag or breathable container. Label the bag/container with the user's name to reduce accidental usage of another person's mask. Discard the bag after retrieval.
- Remove and discard masks if soiled, damaged, or hard to breathe through.

For extended use and reuse of goggles or face shields, personnel should take care not to touch their eye protection. If they touch or adjust their eye protection they must immediately perform hand hygiene. If eye protection becomes visibly soiled or difficult to see through, personnel should remove and clean/disinfect per the manufacturer's instructions. When manufacturer instructions are unavailable, consider:

1. While wearing gloves, carefully wipe the *inside*, followed by the *outside* of the eye protection using a clean cloth saturated with neutral detergent solution or cleaner wipe.
2. Carefully wipe the *outside* of the eye protection using a wipe or clean cloth saturated with EPA-registered hospital disinfectant solution.
3. Wipe the outside of the eye protection with clean water or alcohol to remove residue.
4. Fully dry (air dry or use clean absorbent towels).
5. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

WHAT ABOUT N95 RESPIRATORS?

N95 respirators are different than surgical masks, and should be generally reserved as much as possible for health care workers doing procedures that generate small droplets carrying the virus (such as inserting a breathing tube for a patient). N95 respirators require "fit testing" to properly size.

If your agency is using N95 respirators instead of surgical masks and supplies are limited, the agency should implement extended use and limited reuse of the N95 respirators. [CDC has issued guidance](#) for extended use and limited reuse of N95 respirators, including best practices when removing masks. These methods do not apply for respirators that are visibly soiled or damaged. N95 respirator manufacturers may have specific guidance regarding the reuse of their product and should be consulted before developing facility specific procedures. CDC recommends the following strategies for the reuse of N95 respirators:

- Hang used respirators in a designated storage area or keep them in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. Store respirators so that they do not touch each other and the person using the respirator is clearly identified. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).
- Avoid touching the inside of the respirator.
- If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, discard the respirator and perform hand hygiene as described above.
- Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when putting on a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal.
- Discard N95 respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids, or following close contact with any person known to be co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.

For more information on how to reuse N95 respirators is [available here](#).