

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Fact Sheet

For Assisted Living Facilities



Assisted living facilities (ALFs) are at high risk for SARS-CoV-2 spread due to their congregate nature and population served. This ALF-focused fact sheet highlights common recommendations and clarifications to promote best practices and alignment with [CDC](#) and [DHS](#) guidance. These infection control practices can help protect residents and staff from COVID-19 outbreaks that could contribute to severe infections and hospitalizations and can also be used to prevent spread of other communicable diseases.



What is personal protective equipment (PPE)?

- ◆ PPE is equipment worn by staff to minimize exposure to workplace hazards (e.g., cleaning chemicals, infections) that can cause serious illnesses and injuries.
- ◆ PPE generally consists of gloves, gowns, masks, and eye protection (face shield or goggles).



When and what type of PPE should be worn to prevent infections?

- ◆ When there is the potential for staff to be exposed to blood or body fluids, PPE must be worn to protect staff. This is known as [standard precautions](#).
 - The type of PPE needed depends on the task and anticipated risk of exposure.
 - If there is the potential for staff to get splashed or sprayed, all mucous membranes (eyes, nose and mouth), skin, and clothing should be covered. This includes use of a:
 - Mask
 - Disposable or reusable face shield or goggles (personal glasses are not considered PPE)
 - Disposable gloves
 - Disposable or reusable gown
 - PPE only needs to be worn when doing the task associated with a potential exposure (e.g., cleaning the bathroom).
 - In normal (conventional) operations, disposable PPE is discarded after use and is not reused. Any reusable PPE must be cleaned and disinfected per the manufacturer's instructions before reuse.
- ◆ When there is the potential for exposure to specific infections (e.g., SARS-CoV-2, influenza, norovirus, multidrug-resistant organisms), [transmission-based precautions](#) are used. Additional protection may be necessary to prevent exposure depending on the known transmission method of the germ.
 - For SARS-CoV-2, the virus is transmitted in the air and potentially from the environment, so when entering the room or living space of a resident suspected or known to be infected, staff must wear specific PPE (see Table 1) to prevent exposure.



Table 1 highlights the recommended PPE based on a resident’s COVID-19 status when the facility is operating under [conventional capacity](#). Note that when the facility is operating under [contingency or crisis capacity](#) due to anticipated or actual PPE shortages, PPE optimization strategies need to be utilized.

Table 1. Overview of Recommended PPE based on Resident COVID-19 Status

Resident Status	PPE Type	Recommended PPE	Conventional Capacity Use
No known exposure <i>Facility is operating under normal COVID-19 procedures.</i>	Mask	Surgical/medical mask	Disposable
	Gown	Standard precautions	Disposable or reusable
	Gloves	Standard precautions	Disposable
	Eye protection	Standard precautions	Disposable or reusable
Possible exposure <i>Resident is in transmission-based precautions and is in quarantine.</i>	Mask	Fit-tested N95	Disposable
	Gown	Isolation gown	Disposable or reusable
	Gloves	Required	Disposable
	Eye protection	Face shield (preferred) or goggles	Disposable or reusable
Suspected or confirmed COVID-19 <i>Resident is in transmission-based precautions and is in isolation.</i>	Mask	Fit-tested N95	Disposable
	Gown	Isolation gown	Disposable or reusable
	Gloves	Required	Disposable
	Eye protection	Face shield (preferred) or goggles	Disposable or reusable



How should staff put on (don) and remove (doff) PPE safely?

- ◆ The correct [donning and doffing process](#) is critical for staff to avoid contaminating themselves and their environment. More than one donning and doffing method may be acceptable, so staff should be educated on the facility’s selected process with routine compliance [audits](#) for reinforcement. View CDC’s [“Use PPE Correctly for COVID-19”](#) video (12 minutes) for one process option.
- ◆ It is particularly important to perform [hand hygiene](#) correctly and consistently during the PPE donning and doffing process to maintain safety. View CDC’s [“Clean Hands: Combat COVID-19”](#) video (7 minutes) for hand hygiene strategies.



For additional questions, contact:

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