

Updated: February 11, 2021

Following the release of the update PPE guidelines around mandatory eye protection, several questions were raised. The following provides answers to those questions and will be added to as new questions arise. Further questions can be sent to pandemic@viha.ca.

1. Wearing eye protection, does this apply to me?

Yes, this applies to any staff member who will be working within 2-metres of a patient within acute care (health care providers, FMO, Lab, housekeeping etc.).

2. Examples of eye protection (in addition to a medical grade mask) include:

A full face shield that covers the front and sides of the face or well-fitting goggles

- *Prescription eyeglasses or safety glasses with gaps between the glasses and the face are NOT sufficient to protect from all splashes or droplet spray and thus are not considered adequate protection*

Potential benefits of wearing full face shield include coverage of the whole face, protection of an extended-wear medical grade mask or respirator from contamination, and prevention of direct contact with the face near mucous membranes.

3. What if I require prescription goggles?

Discuss with your manager who can reach out to Occupational Health and Safety for support in ordering.

4. If I am wearing a face shield, do I need to wear a mask as well?

Face shields do not replace masks or face coverings. A face shield is used to protect the eyes of the person wearing it. Using a face shield without a mask won't protect:

- *you from potentially inhaling infectious respiratory droplets exhaled by others, or*
- *others from your infectious respiratory droplets, as they can escape around the face shield.*

In accordance with the [Masking Policy at Island Health](#), masks are to be worn in all care facilities at all times, unless the person is eating or drinking – in which case they must maintain 2-metres of distance from others.

5. Do I need to wear eye protection when working at my work station or at the nurses station? What if there are patients in the hallway?

No, not necessarily. The requirement for wearing eye protection is within 2 metres of the patient where there will be longer encounters than a brief passing. In high risk areas like the ED where it is an uncontrolled environment and you may need to respond quickly or a patient may approach you for care at any time, it is prudent to wear eye protection for prolonged periods. Please continue to follow the Island Health Mask Policy.

6. Can I wear my eye protection between patients without cleaning?

Yes under the following conditions:

- 1- The patient is not on additional precautions,
- 2- You do not remove your eye protection or medical-grade mask.

If you wear your eye protection into a patient room, return to your workstation still wearing your eye protection and then proceed to visit another patient, you can wear the same eye protection.

If you wear your eye protection into a patient room, return to your workstation and remove your eye protection, the eye protection must be cleaned and safely stored before being worn again.

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7. When do I need to clean my eye protection?

Your eye protection should be cleaned each time it is removed, or after caring for a patient on additional precautions.

8. How can I clean and disinfect face shields, visors and goggles?

Face shields, visors and goggles do not require cleaning and disinfection between patients, residents or clients if you are not removing them.

- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection in the Absence of Water](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection with Water](#)

9. How long can I use a single face shield with attached foam?

We currently have a good supply of this type of face shield, so reusing the face shield for greater than one day/shift isn't necessary.

10. Where do I order the reusable face shields, visors and goggles?

Please refer to the [Island Health PPE Storage & Ordering Guide](#) and the [Eye Protection Ordering Guide](#).

11. How can I prevent my face shield, visor or goggles from fogging?

Anti-fog products may be used on face shields, visors and goggles, and can be ordered by Direct Purchase. See [Eye Protection Ordering Guide](#) for ordering information.

If you need further assistance, please discuss with your leader as to which section of the [PPE Required During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) document closely aligns with your area.