MASK POLICY

Workplace masking policy for health-care providers, patients and visitors

This document outlines Island Health and provincial expectations for the use of face masks in the workplace at Island Health. Masking, combined with the COVID-19 vaccine and the safety precautions of physical distancing, excellent hand hygiene, and staying home when unwell, will help keep health-care workers and our patients, clients, residents and families safe from COVID-19. Questions? Please read our FAQs.

NOTES:

- Failure to comply with the policy may result in corrective action, up to and including termination (excepting legitimate reasons why an employee is unable to follow this direction).
- N95 respirators are to be reserved for AGMPs and where N95s are part of the PPE required for airborne and or specific precautions.

ISLAND HEALTH STAFF, MEDICAL STAFF AND CONTRACTORS			
Environment	**Environment Example**	**Type of Mask**	**Used by**
Health-care facility or care environment (Non-LTC areas)	• An area within a health care facility (including a contracted facility), hallway or lobby, which is accessible to patients, residents or clients who are there to access care or services. • This includes any other location where care is provided, such as home and community care locations (including a client's home). It does not include locations such as administrative areas or private offices which are not generally accessed by patients, residents or clients.	• Medical-grade mask • N95 or an approved reusable respirator according to Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)	• All staff, medical staff and contracted service providers • See also PPE Guidelines for Care Providers
Administrative areas _within_ a care facility	Examples: • Admin offices (i.e. CNE or leader) • Education or meeting rooms on a unit • Administrative wings (clinical and non-clinical) • Libraries • Supportive services • FMO/support areas • Regional laundry plants	• Medical-grade mask	• All staff, medical staff and contracted service providers

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ISLAND HEALTH STAFF, MEDICAL STAFF AND CONTRACTORS			
Environment	**Environment Example**	**Type of Mask**	**Used by**
Long-Term Care & Assisted Living facilities	• An area within a health care facility (including a contracted facility), hallway or lobby, which is accessible to patients, residents or clients who are there to access care or services. • This includes any other location where care is provided, such as home and community care locations (including a client's home). It does not include locations such as administrative areas or private offices which are not generally accessed by patients, residents or clients.	• Medical-grade mask • according to Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA)	• All staff, medical staff and contracted service providers • See also PPE Guidelines for Care Providers
Administrative areas _not_ located in a care facility	• Corporate services where care is not provided • Examples: Administration Building (formerly Begbie Hall), Aulds Road, etc.	• Non-medical, 3-layer cloth masks can be worn when 2-metres distance cannot be maintained • Medical-grade masks must be worn when visiting or transitioning through a care facility	• All staff, medical staff and contracted service providers
Common areas	Areas where staff, medical staff, patients, clients, residents, families and/or members of the public are present, e.g.: • hospital atrium • hallways • coffee shops • elevators • washrooms	• Medical-grade masks • Medical-grade mask can be removed for eating or drinking, while maintaining 2-metres distance	• All staff, medical staff and contracted service providers

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VISITORS			
Environment	**Environment Example**	**Type of Mask**	**Used by**
Health-care facility or care environment (excluding Long Term Care and Assisted Living)	• When entering and moving around and visiting a loved one in **any** health care facility, including clinical and non-clinical areas • For the duration of their visit (indoor and outdoor) and adhere to any preventative measures required to support visits	• Medical-grade masks	• All visitors
Long-Term Care & Assisted Living facilities	• When entering and moving around and visiting a loved one in **any** health care facility, including clinical and non-clinical areas • For the duration of their visit (indoor and outdoor) and adhere to any preventative measures required to support visits	• Medical-grade masks	• **Fully** vaccinated visitors*

* Vaccinated is defined as having had 2 doses of COVID-19 Vaccine plus a duration of 7 days following second dose.

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PATIENTS			
Environment	**Environment Example**	**Type of Mask**	**Used by**
Healthcare facility or care environment Excluding Long-Term Care and Assisted Living settings	• During transport within a healthcare facility • When moving around a healthcare facility • While in a waiting area (ED or any department) • While in any bed space that is only separated by a curtain in the ED • Actively coughing in a multi-bed room on droplet or contact/droplet precautions ○ single room should be prioritised where possible, see bed placement for patients on additional precautions	• Medical-grade mask	• Patients

Exemptions for Visitors and Patients:

- Exceptions to the policy must be applied for:
  - people under 5 years old,
  - people unable to wear a mask because of a health condition or physical or
  - mental impairment,
  - people unable to put on or remove a mask without help from another person, and
  - people communicating with someone with a hearing impairment.
- People who are required to wear a mask and are able to wear a mask, but who choose not to as a matter of preference, are not exempt.

RESOURCES:

- PPE Guidelines
- Masking Frequently Asked Questions
- Masking Posters for Facilities *(scroll to 'Signage' – order via print services)*
- Eye Protection Frequently Asked Questions
- BCCDC – Face Masks: How are they different
- World Health Organization – Poster: How to Wear a Medical Mask Safely
- Health Canada – Appropriate Use of Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering
- Health Canada – Poster: How to Safely Use a Non-Medical Mask