

**USE OF PPE DURING PANDEMIC EVENT**

**Standard Operating Procedure #1**

During work activities that incorporate personal protective equipment (PPE) as an additional measure, staff must combine this equipment with proper hand hygiene and other necessary protective measures (e.g. social distancing). PPE is only effective if worn correctly. Where PPE supplies are stored will be identified at each library location, instructions on the correct use of PPE will be posted in a visible spot, and the use of designated disposal bins will be required.

**GLOVES**

Hand protection such as disposal nitrile or latex gloves should be used as an additional measure, not as a substitute for hand washing for COVID-19 protection. Gloves must be put on before starting a work activity and they should be removed, and hands washed immediately after the work activity. For instance, gloves are to be worn when preparing materials for curbside pickup orders, including the handling of carts, materials and VPL bags.

* Hand protection is the last personal protective equipment (PPE) that is to be put on, and the first to be removed.
* Gloves should be removed with care to avoid skin contact with the outside of the glove.
* Staff shall plan out their work activities to optimize the number of gloves used per shift. Supplies are based on an estimate of approximately 4 pairs of gloves per full time shift. However, glove use shall not be restricted.
* In the event of contamination, gloves shall be replaced.
* Disposable hand protection may not be effective in situations where moderate or frequent material handling activities will occur. In the case when a pair of gloves tears, staff shall pause the work activity, safely remove the gloves, wash their hands and put on a fresh set of gloves.

Refer to the [Public Health Ontario Steps to Take Off Gloves](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/E/2013/ect-gloves-doffing.pdf?la=en), which shall be posted near where gloves are stored inside the library, and Appendix 1.

**MASKS**

Wearing masks where the hazard of COVID-19 is low can create a false sense of security that can lead to neglecting other essential measures, such as good hand hygiene practices. Furthermore, using a mask incorrectly may hamper its effectiveness in reducing the risk of transmission. However, the use of a mask is recommended to provide reassurance to coworkers and the public that all possible precautions are being taken. The purpose of the mask is to reduce transmission of the virus to others rather than personal protection. If masks are used, their appropriate use and disposal is essential to ensure that they are effective and to avoid any increase in risk of transmission associated with incorrect use and disposal.

* When a mask becomes damp or humid, staff shall replace it with a new mask.
* Single-use masks are not to be re-used. Staff shall discard used masks by following appropriate procedures.
* Mask supplies are based on an estimate of approximately 4 masks per full time shift. However, mask use shall not be restricted.
* Staff must ensure the use of a mask does not result in touching the face more due to heat or discomfort.

Refer to the [Public Health Ontario guidance on using masks](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en), which shall be posted near where masks are stored inside the library, and Appendix 2.

**Putting on PPE shall be done in this order:**

1. **Mask**:
* Wash hands with soap & water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
* Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck
* Fit flexible band to nose bridge
* Fit snug to face and below chin
1. **Gloves**:
* Extend to cover wrist

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**STAFF REPORTING PERSONAL HEALTH CONCERNS**

**Standard Operating Procedure #1**

**Removing PPE shall be done in this order:**

1. **Gloves**
* Outside of gloves is contaminated
* Grasp outside of glove with opposite gloved hand; peel off
* Hold removed glove in gloved hand
* Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist
* Peel glove off over first glove
* Discard gloves in an appropriate or designated waste receptacle
* Wash hands with soap & water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
1. **Mask:**
* Front of mask may be contaminated — do not touch.
* Grasp bottom, then top ties or elastics and remove
* Discard mask in an appropriate or designated waste receptacle.
* Wash hands with soap & water for at least 15 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer

**Resources**

Health Canada. (2020). *Wash Your Hands*.  <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/diseases-maladies/reduce-spread-covid-19-wash-your-hands/eng-handwashing.pdf>

Public Health Ontario. (2013). *Steps to Take Off Gloves*. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/E/2013/ect-gloves-doffing.pdf?la=en>

Public Health Ontario. (April 10, 2020). *When and How to Wear a Mask – Recommendations for the General Public*. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-wear-mask.pdf?la=en>

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