

Appropriate Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)



If caring for a young person who has tested positive, the service provider, supported by DCJ as necessary, should ensure access to appropriate PPE for those staff.

Sourcing

Due to the global shortage of PPE, DCJ are working to source adequate PPE supplies for service providers given that suspected or confirmed cases in residential OOHHC homes are a priority cohort group to gain access to this equipment. We know that many providers will have begun to source and store their own PPEs and infection control kits over the last few weeks as COVID-19 has become an increasing threat.

Types and Usage of PPE

There are many different types of PPE. General surgical masks are deemed most appropriate in the residential care setting.

Staff members who use appropriate PPE are exempt from the 'close contact' rule if they have minimal contact with a confirmed case during their shift. This means that staff can be rostered on and come to work and go home as needed, without needing to self-isolate – as long as PPE and other hygiene requirements have been met. The Public Health Unit can provide advice regarding whether PPE is being used correctly.

This table outlines the different types of PPE and when they should be used:

PPE Product	Appropriate Use
Gloves	
Disposable	Should be used when in direct contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, or their environment e.g. cleaning up after them.
Masks	
General Surgical	<p>Should be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By young people with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 • By young people with respiratory symptoms if they have to be in a shared space with others (which should be avoided in the first instance) • By people (i.e. staff) who are in the same room as someone with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 (although this time should be minimised) • By people who have to touch, or have contact with a suspected or confirmed case's bodily fluids and / or secretions. <p>For staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove and dispose of mask after leaving suspected or confirmed case's room <p>For young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change face mask when damp or if visibly soiled or damaged
P2/N95	Provide a higher level of protection than general surgical masks. Not required in the residential care setting but can be used in place of general surgical masks.
Protective Eyewear	
PPE goggles	<p>Eyewear should be used when in contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 to avoid droplets from entering the eye.</p> <p>Disposable eyewear is recommended, however if this is not possible, ensure that non-disposable glasses and goggles are properly disinfected before and after usage.</p>

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The advice in this fact sheet has been taken from the *Guidelines: Residential Care Settings for Young People in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and COVID-19*, prepared by the Department of Communities and Justice, in consultation with ACWA and an expert group of service providers, and the Australian Services Union (ASU).

PPE Product	Appropriate Use
Gowns/Overalls	
Disposable gowns/aprons	Should be worn when in direct contact with a suspected or confirmed case, or their environment. Gown is preferable with sleeves tucked into the gown.

Disposal

- All used disposable gloves, surgical masks, and other contaminated items should be placed in a lined waste bin before disposing of them with other household waste.
- All contaminated items should be placed in a tied/sealed bag before putting them in the normal waste system. If items are disposed of in this way, then a specific pick-up service or more frequent waste disposal will not be required, and the usual waste pick up service for the home will suffice.
- The above guidance relating to disposal of contaminated items also applies for people who are in self-isolation for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

More information can be found in the *Guidelines: Residential Care Settings for Young People in Out of Home Care (OOHC) and COVID-19*. E.g. Appendix 4: Cleaning Procedures—Waste.

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