

Guidance on Optimization of PPE in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
March 22, 2020

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, through the Department of Public Health and its partner agency the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is acutely aware of rapidly expanding needs for personal protective equipment (PPE) for numerous organizations across the state - including masks, gowns, and eye protection.

We are deploying all possible resources to rapidly increase supplies through all potential avenues—without compromising on protective specifications. Our efforts include advocating for more supplies from the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS), sourcing new suppliers, and working with local partners to acquire excess inventory. Every avenue is being explored.

Given current constraints, the Commonwealth must conserve the use of PPE by allocating it according to the following U.S. prioritization and use guidelines:

| Situation | PPE required in Conservation Environment |
|---|---|
| During aerosol generating procedures on Covid-19 patients at medical facilities | Specialized N95/ FFP2 mask or higher; heavy duty medical gowns, full eye shields, medical gloves and aprons |
| Areas of medical facilities providing general care to Covid-19 patients (confirmed or presumptive) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For healthcare workers: N95 mask or standard medical mask, standard medical gowns, full eye shields, and medical gloves ▪ Cleaners: Heavy duty gloves or standard gloves, standard medical masks and gowns ▪ Necessary visitors: standard medical masks, gowns, and gloves ▪ Personnel/patients/visitors in other areas of the facility: No PPE |
| Testing labs manipulating Covid-19 samples | Standard medical masks, standard medical gowns, full eye shields, and standard medical gloves |
| Ambulances and other vehicles with patient transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For medical first responders in direct contact with suspected, presumptive, confirmed COVID19 patients with respiratory symptoms: standard medical mask, standard medical gowns, full eye shields, and medical gloves ▪ For others in direct contact with suspected, presumptive, confirmed COVID19 patients without respiratory symptoms: standard medical masks and other standard precautions. Other PPE may be used where available. ▪ For drivers or co-passengers in non-patient compartments or other indirect contact: No PPE |
| Fire/Police (not in situation above) | PPE not required unless engaging in situations listed above (e.g., transporting patients with respiratory symptoms) or engaging in close contact with an individual with flu-like symptoms |
| Other | For cleaners or caregivers in homes, co-living spaces, community buildings, educational centers, correctional facilities with suspected Covid-19 patients —standard medical masks and standard gloves |

For further reference, [see this link to CDC](#) guidelines for conservation and optimization of PPE. For current CDC guidance on reuse of N95, [please see this link](#). For current CDC guidance to law enforcement’s use of PPE, [please see this link](#).

In the near-term, given current supplies, PPE will be prioritized for medical facilities on the front lines. This is an evolving, rapidly changing situation and we will continue to re-evaluate this guidance as supply levels improve. Based upon the guidance noted above, the Commonwealth will, if possible, provide a 7-day supply to support organizations that will come in contact with suspected COVID19 patients and would otherwise no longer be able to operate because of lack of appropriate PPE.

Please submit all requests for PPE via the channels shown on the [illustrative diagram linked here](#); the Commonwealth will coordinate your requests. These guidelines are intended to optimize the Commonwealth’s PPE supplies. In general, PPE conservation is strongly recommended where possible.

References:

- CDC Infection control guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>
- CDC N95 Re-use guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>
- CDC Guidance for law enforcement: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>
- Illustrative diagram of PPE request flow: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ma-covid-19-ppe-request-process-chart/download>