



Conservation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

This document provides advice on the conservation of PPE worn during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Currently, there are severe difficulties being experienced in sourcing PPE. Each facility should perform a risk assessment on the suitability of PPE conservation measures based on the clinical situation and availability of stock.

Surgical and P2/N95 Masks

Surgical and P2/N95 masks do not need to be removed between each patient. These masks can remain in place until they become saturated with the wearer's respirations or they are visibly soiled or contaminated by patient respiratory droplets or secretions. Care should be taken not to touch the mask whilst in use. The masks must be changed if the wearer touches the mask.

P2/N95 masks must not be used by patients under any circumstances. P2/N95 masks must only be used by healthcare workers (HCW) or other personnel when aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) are being performed or when HCWs require to attend hospitalised, acutely unwell patients requiring frequent close or prolonged contact.

Environmental cleaning staff do not require to wear surgical or P2/N95 masks for routine environmental cleaning in COVID-19 areas. Environmental cleaning staff should wear P2/N95 masks when cleaning areas where AGPs have been performed within the last 30 minutes.

Goggles and Face Visors

Goggles and face visors do not need to be removed between each patient. These items can remain in place for extended periods. Care should be taken not to touch the goggles or face visors whilst in use. Goggles or face visors require to be worn whenever a surgical or P2/N95 mask is required to be worn, however, the goggles or face visors do not need to be changed when the mask is changed.

If, after risk assessment, re-use is considered appropriate, then goggles and face visors should be cleaned and disinfected using an appropriate hospital grade solution or wipe each time the goggles or visors are removed. Due to the difficulty in cleaning the foam backing to the face visor, these should be reserved for individual staff member use.

Gowns

In COVID-19 cohort wards and clinics, gowns do not need to be removed between patients unless they are visibly soiled or high risk/close contact tasks are being performed.

All PPE is required to be changed when leaving the COVID-19 clinical area or moving between COVID-19 clinical areas and non-COVID-19 areas.