

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during COVID-19

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About This Policy

Effective Date: July 9, 2020
Last Updated: July 9, 2020
Responsible University Office: Human Resources
Responsible University Administrator: Chief Inclusion and Human Resources Officer

Policy Contact:
Human Resources
clarksonhr@clarkson.edu

Applies to

This Policy applies to all Faculty and Staff across all University departments, Institutes, Centers and Schools.

Definition

Personal Protective Equipment:

Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE," is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses.

Face Covering:

A face covering is any well-secured fabric mask that is at least 2 layers thick and fully covers your nose and mouth. The covering should fit snugly against the sides of the face so there are no large gaps. The face covering should also have ear loops or ties so that it can be adjusted to securely fit on your face and prevent slipping. A face covering with an exhalation valve is not permitted as it allows unfiltered exhaled air to escape to others.

Face Shield:

A face shield is a clear plastic barrier that wraps around the sides of the wearer's face and extends to below the chin.

Gloves:

Gloves are a form of hand protection that can be used to protect employees' hands from being exposed to a hazard. They come in a variety of materials and thicknesses.

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Guidelines

Measures for protecting workers from exposure to, and infection with, SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), depends on the type of work being performed and exposure risk, including potential for interaction with people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and contamination of the work environment. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is one of the control measures that can be used in conjunction with elimination, substitution, engineering and administrative controls to prevent worker exposures. PPE includes, but is not limited to gloves, gowns /aprons, safety glasses, face shields, face coverings and respirators.

Face Coverings:

The purpose of face coverings is to prevent the person wearing the mask from spreading respiratory droplets when talking, sneezing, or coughing, which is the primary route of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 from person to person. If everyone wears a cloth face covering when out in public, the risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 can be reduced for the community. Since people may spread the virus before symptoms start, or even if people never have symptoms, wearing a cloth face covering may protect others around you. Face coverings worn by others may also protect you from getting the virus from people carrying the virus.

- All individuals at Clarkson University must wear a face covering any time they are in a public space within a building (ex. hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, elevators, breaks rooms) as well as any time they cannot maintain 6 feet social distancing from another individual.
 - If you have a health problem that makes it hard for you to wear a face covering, please contact Human Resources (clarksonhr@clarkson.edu) or Environmental Health & Safety (earnold@clarkson.edu) for possible alternatives.
- Clarkson will provide all employees with 2 cloth face coverings upon their return to work.
 - Employees are also welcome to wear their own face covering, as long as it meets CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>).
 - Face coverings with exhalation valves **ARE NOT allowed** to be worn on campus.

- Please do not use health care worker masks, such as N95s or surgical masks, unless your job requires you to do so. It is essential that we save health care worker masks for our health care workers.
- Employees must not share their face covering with anyone else.
- Always ensure to properly don and doff your face covering.
- It is recommended to wash your face covering once a day by hand or machine using detergent, and any time it is visibly soiled. The face covering should be fully dry before using. Individuals should have a few face coverings so they can rotate for washing.
- Employees are required to continue to **keep 6 feet between themselves and others, whenever feasible**. The face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.

Gloves:

For the general public, CDC recommends wearing gloves when you are cleaning or caring for someone who is sick. Gloves are also advised when using hazardous materials as directed by the product's safety data sheet (SDS).

In most other situations, like using a shared copier, opening a door or pushing elevator buttons, wearing gloves is **not** necessary. Wearing gloves will not necessarily protect you from getting COVID-19 as it does not reduce the surface-hand-face transmission mechanism, and it may still lead to the spread of germs if not used wisely. Instead, practicing everyday preventive measures such as social distancing at least 6 feet from others, washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol), and wearing a face covering when you have to go out in public is more effective.

If wearing gloves to clean or care for someone who is sick, always ensure to:

- properly don and doff your gloves;
- not touch your face or phone with gloved hands;
- change them frequently to prevent cross contamination;
- throw your gloves in the trash when done using them, and
- always wash your hands after removing your gloves.

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Procedures

Face Coverings:

How to Put On (Don) a Face Covering

- Wash your hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer.
- Inspect the mask to ensure it is in good condition and it is not damaged. Damaged masks should be discarded immediately.
- Place the mask on your face with the ear loops over the ears or ties behind the head.
- The mask should fully cover your nose and mouth with no gaps between the mask and your face.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer after placing the mask on.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.

How to Take Off (Doff) a Face Covering

- Wash your hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer.
- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops to remove the mask from your face, trying to only handle it by the ear loops or ties at all times.
- Fold the outside corners of the mask together.
- Place the mask in a paper or plastic bag for storage if you will be taking it off when outside your home. This will prevent others from touching it as well as germs transferring to/from the mask from other surfaces such as a table.
- Wash hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer.

Gloves:

How to Put On (Don) Gloves

- Wash your hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer.
- Choose the correct size glove.
- Place the gloves on your hands.
- Inspect the gloves to ensure they are in good condition and are not damaged (ex. ripped, holes). Damaged gloves should be discarded immediately.
- Avoid touching your face or phone while wearing gloves.

How to Take Off (Doff) Gloves

- Grasp the outside edge of the glove on one hand near your wrist.
- Peel away the glove from your hand, turning the glove inside-out.
- Hold the glove that was just removed in the opposite gloved hand.
- Slide your finger from the ungloved hand under the wrist of the remaining glove.
- Turn the second glove inside out while pulling away, leaving the first glove inside.
- Discard the gloves into the general trash.
- Wash hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer.

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Related Information

- Please refer to related FAQs: <https://intranet.clarkson.edu/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19-FAQs-on-Social-Distancing-and-face-coverings.pdf>
- Please refer to the Clarkson Returning to Work Safety Training COVID-19 Presentation: <https://intranet.clarkson.edu/administrative/hr/covid-19-workplace-policies/covid-19-return-to-work/>
- Please refer to the emergency rule effective July 9th, 2020 by the New York State Department of Health: https://regs.health.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/emergency_regulations/Enforcement%20of%20Social%20Distancing%20Measures.pdf

Revision History

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