

INFORMATION SHEET

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Issue 1 – Critical/ essential workers returning to the workplace

PPE protects the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items such as safety helmets, gloves, eye protection, high-visibility clothing, safety footwear and safety harnesses. It also includes respiratory protective equipment, such as face masks.

1. Requirement to wear PPE

Where PPE is already worn during a work activity to protect against non-COVID-19 hazards, it should continue to be used. The relevant activity/ task related risk assessments should outline what type of PPE is required and when it is to be worn. Colleges/ Professional Service Units (PSU) are responsible for purchasing this PPE.

2. Identifying the need for additional PPE to manage risks associated to COVID-19

A specific COVID-19 risk assessment must be completed, and should identify the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19. When carrying out the risk assessment it is important to consider the potential route(s) of exposure (inhalation/ ingestion/ injection), in order to identify suitable control measures. PPE may be used as a last resort, when all other possible control measures have been explored and implemented and the task has been considered as safe to go ahead.

Potential control measures including any additional PPE identified in relation to COVID-19 specific risks should be discussed with the team to allow them the opportunity to feed in ideas and suggestions, ask questions and raise any concerns.

People with certain respiratory health conditions may find wearing a respirator difficult. Others may find wearing a respirator claustrophobic. These factors need to be considered as part of the overall risk assessment for the work activities they are involved in.

3. Where social distancing cannot be maintained

PPE is not to be used as an alternative to social distancing. As a last resort and where social distancing measures are not feasible, staff may be offered the use of a face mask (FFP3, FFP2 or surgical/ procedure style mask).

Wearing a mask can create a false sense of security and it is possible people may be less attentive to proven hygiene measures such as hand washing and social distancing. There is also an increased risk of self-contamination through touching and reusing dirty masks.

Staff should be:

- Made aware of the limitations of masks;
- Provided with training on donning and doffing the mask;
- Reminded about practising good hygiene and informed of how to suitably dispose of PPE after use.

Similarly gloves will only be required in certain circumstances and when wearing them, it is important that staff are made aware that they should refrain from touching their face, hair and other equipment e.g. mobile phones.

4. Procurement of PPE specifically related to COVID-19

Procurement are currently working on a process for ordering PPE and further details will be confirmed in due course. The ordering process will be via users:


- A SharePoint site is being set up with details of NPS suppliers
- Staff can approach for a quote on their requirements
- Place the order via ABW for delivery


Weekly stock details will also be shared.

5. Potential COVID-19 PPE, guidance and resources

| PPE type | Guidance | Training/ Information resources |
|----------|---|---------------------------------|
| Gloves | <p>Please refer to Swansea University Glove Arrangements (HSA-10105) when making a choice about suitable glove types and to consider limitations of use.</p> <p>Staff wearing gloves should be mindful when wearing gloves to avoid touching their face/eyes/mouth and other items including mobile phones etc.</p> <p>Staff wearing gloves for prolonged periods of time should ensure that after removing gloves and washing their hands the hands are moisturised</p> <p>Donning and doffing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video of donning/ doffing • Poster for donning/ doffing <p>Users should understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What the gloves are used to protect against. • Limitations of the gloves, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gloves only protect the wearer and do not remove contaminant from the workplace | |

| PPE type | Guidance | Training/ Information resources |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some types of gloves are inconvenient and can interfere with the way the wearer does their work ○ Wearing gloves often causes the wearer to lose touch, feel and dexterity ○ Protection depends on the correct selection of glove material, a good fit and proper use. | |
| Respirator* | <p>Respiratory protective equipment should be identified as part of the risk assessment.</p> <p>Disposable face masks may include FFP2/ FFP3 masks and should conform to EN149:2001 and be CE marked. Other types of reusable respirators may also be selected and used.</p> <p>All people wearing tight fitting face masks must have a face fit test. Further information is available on the RPE page of staff intranet</p> <p>Donning/ doffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HSE Video of donning/ doffing** ● HSE poster for donning/ doffing | |
| Surgical mask (procedure/ laboratory) | <p>Surgical masks must conform to EN14683 and be fluid repellent. They should be CE marked.</p> <p>Donning and doffing Video for donning/ doffing</p> | |
| Apron | <p>Disposable plastic apron – a variety of apron types exist and are available dependant on tasks/ activity/area the they will be used within e.g. catering, medical</p> <p>Removing an apron <i>If disposable gloves are being used, they should be removed first.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break the neck loop and waist straps. 2. Roll the apron downwards from your chest so the contaminated outer surface is folded inwards. Avoid touching the outer surface of the apron with your hands (Fig 4). 3. Dispose of the apron in a hazardous waste bin. 4. Perform hand hygiene | |

| PPE type | Guidance | Training/ Information resources |
|-------------|---|--|
| | | <p>Fig 4. Removing an apron</p>  |
| Face shield | <p>Face shields must be CE marked.</p> <p>The advantages and limitations of face shields should be considered in a risk assessment and communicated to wearers.</p> <p>When worn together with a properly fitted surgical mask, face shields offer protection from contamination to others, as well as to the wearer.</p> <p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Droplet protection directly in front of the wearer (but not to the sides or underneath the shield). • The wearer's face and facial expressions can be seen, which may be important when communicating. • Some types of face shields may be cleaned, disinfected, and reused (depending on the manufacturer's instructions). • Provides eye protection that a surgical mask cannot give. <p>Limitations</p> <p>Gaps to the sides and underneath the shield which may allow virus-laden droplets to infect mucous membranes (e.g. mouth, nose, eyes).</p> <p>Aerosols generated by the wearer are still released and can escape from the sides and underneath of the shield and travel the same distances as when not wearing a face shield. Therefore protection to others from wearer is significantly reduced if opting for a face shield instead of a face mask or face covering.</p> <p>Putting on a face shield (donning)</p> <p>Bend forward slightly, holding on to the straps of the face shield with both hands. Do not touch the front of the face shield.</p> <p>Using the head strap fasten it or place the elastic behind your head, so that the foam rests on your forehead.</p> | |

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| | <p>Once the shield is on, check to make sure it covers the front and sides of your face and no areas are left uncovered. The forehead band should sit about 3cm above your eyebrows, with the bottom of the shield sitting below chin level.</p> <p>You must always have the shield down. The shield should never be pushed to the “up” position.</p> <p>If your visor does not stay in position, tighten by adjusting the elastic/ head strap on the side of the face shield. Each type of shield is slightly different. Face shields can be kept on for as long as they keep their shape and remain intact; and when appropriate steps are taken to avoid cross contamination</p> <p>Removing a face shield (doffing) At no time should the front of the face shield be touched.</p> <p>Take off other PPE first and wash hands before taking off the shield.</p> <p>Tilt your head forward slightly, grab the strap at the temple and pull forward and over your head.</p> <p>Dispose of the face shield safely if it isn't reusable.</p> <p>Wash hands again.</p>  <p>Cleaning and disinfecting Reusing single-use face shields is not recommended and they should be discarded immediately after use. Reusing should only be considered in the context of a critical supply issue.</p> <p>Carefully wipe the inside followed by the outside of the face shield using a clean cloth saturated with sanitiser/ disinfectant, or a wipe.</p> <p>Carefully wipe the outside of the face shield using a clean cloth saturated with sanitiser/ disinfectant, or a wipe.</p> <p>Wipe the outside of the face shield with clean water to remove residue if required.</p> <p>Fully dry or use clean absorbent paper towels.</p> <p>Store face shield as directed.</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene.</p> | |

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|----------|--|---------------------------------|
| | <p>Reusable shields should not be shared. If disposable shields are used they should be disposed of in the relevant waste stream.</p> <p>If available, the manufacturer's instructions for use should be followed.</p> | |

*KN95 is a performance rating under the Chinese standard GB2626:2006. KN95 **must not** be used as PPE at work as their effectiveness cannot be assured.

**The FFP2/ FFP3 mask may not be the same model as shown in the video however the principles of donning, doffing and fit checking remain the same.

6. Training and instruction in the use of PPE

Anyone required to wear PPE must receive suitable training and instruction on:

- Checking PPE prior to use for defects;
- How to don (put on) and doff (take off) PPE;
- Cleaning PPE (except for disposable PPE);
- Storing PPE;
- Suitable disposal of PPE.

Records of training must be kept.

7. Cleaning & storage

Reusable PPE is to be thoroughly cleaned after use according to manufacturer instructions, using appropriate cleaning substances and must not be shared with other staff/ students. Adequate storage facilities should be provided for suitable storage of PPE.

Laboratory coats

Current advice states that personal lab coats should not be taken home to wash as this increases the potential contamination risk. In line with advice on reusable PPE, lab coats should not be shared and provision for frequent laundering of lab coats by an external service or provision of internal laundry facilities, and procedures for laundering are required. The use of disposable lab coats may be an alternative option.

Measures must be taken to ensure risks of cross contamination are minimised. Lab coats must be placed into soluble or soluble strip laundry bags. External laundry services on the university framework should provide soluble bags for the storage of lab coats prior to collection and return all lab coats individually wrapped.

Further consideration will need to be given to managing the provision of reusable PPE and lab coats when more staff and students return to Campus.

8. Disposal of PPE

Laboratories are to dispose of PPE in line with standard local waste disposal practices using the appropriately coloured bag for the area. No change is required to the existing disposal of PPE generated in research laboratories and health care practical areas.

Non-laboratory used PPE is to be disposed of in the precautionary PPE disposal points in accordance with guidance (see [WMGN35](#)).

PPE used to deal with suspected or confirmed COVID19 cases is to be disposed of in accordance with guidance (see [WMGN36](#)).

9. Coping with a lack of PPE

Consult with an Occupational Hygienist about the possibility of extending the life of single use PPE. Extending the life of single use PPE should only be done in exceptional circumstances as a result of shortage of supply.

The extensive use of PPE for healthcare purposes has given rise to a shortage in the industry. Health and safety risks must be adequately controlled when the usual PPE supply is temporarily unavailable and will require some special input to ensure that the protection provided by the alternative PPE or ways of working does not put staff or students at risk.

Consider the following:

- Look at alternative ways of reducing exposure by ways other than PPE. PPE is the last line of protection and should only be used in addition to using other reasonably practicable control measures.
- Consult guidance and COSHH Essentials sheets for methods of good control practice for specific tasks, to help select possible different ways of working which minimise the health risks from hazardous substances.
- Consult with suppliers to ensure the availability of PPE.
- Ensure that alternative PPE meets appropriate standards and achieves the level of control required.
- Avoid using RPE which is described of being “equivalent” to a standard. Where this is not possible then try to verify the level of protection achieved. Current Government derogation of CE marking for PPE is only applicable to health care workers and there is currently no relaxation of existing health and safety requirements for the supply for PPE intended for use in settings outside healthcare.
- When sourcing alternative RPE note that a fit test is required for any tight-fitting RPE, unless you can source the same mask, in the same size, for which the worker has been fit tested before. Inadequate fit can reduce the protection provided to the wearer.
- Availability or access to face-fit testing equipment and competent people may be an issue so should be part of your return to work plan.
- Take steps to preserve stocks of suitable PPE during the extended COVID-19 outbreak by; limiting PPE to those workers who need it; maximising the useful life of

PPE (cleaning and storing carefully); and matching RPE with the appropriately assigned protection factor (APF) for individual exposures.

10. Face coverings

Whilst not classed as a form of PPE there are some circumstances when wearing a face covering may be marginally beneficial as a precautionary measure. The evidence suggests that wearing a face covering does not protect you, however, it may protect others if you are infected but have not developed symptoms.

It is important to know that the evidence of the benefit of using a face covering to protect others is weak and the effect is likely to be small, therefore face coverings are not a replacement for the other ways of managing risk, including minimising time spent in contact, using fixed teams and partnering for close-up work, and increasing hand and surface washing.

The most effective way to protect yourself and others from infection is to follow social distancing rules, avoid touching surfaces and your face, and wash your hands regularly. Face coverings are not a substitute for these measures but in some circumstances where it might be difficult to stay 2m away from others, the Welsh Government are advising the use of three-layer, non-medical face coverings.

For further advice on face coverings please see the [Face Covering Information Sheet](#).

Anyone wearing a face covering should:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
- When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or the face covering, as it's possible to contaminate them with germs from the hands.
- Change the face covering if it becomes damp or if you have touched it.
- Continue to wash hands regularly.
- Change and wash the face covering daily.
- If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it, following disposal instructions if on Campus.
- Practise social distancing wherever possible.

11. Further Information

- [Swansea University H&S Intranet Page](#)
- [HSE PPE guidance](#)
- [HSE Safety Bulletin](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Business Support](#)
- [Sustainability Waste Management Guidance Notes](#)