



DCNR COVID-19 Safety Fact Sheet # 2 5/8/2020 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The COVID-19 outbreak presents unusual circumstances that require us to do whatever is necessary to further our mission. This fact sheet discusses simple things that you can do to keep yourself and others healthy and stop the spread of this virus. Treat everyone as though they are a COVID-19 carrier and every common surface as if it harbors the virus. Remember, one careless person can spread the virus to the whole work unit. It is our responsibility to keep our community and colleagues safe.

This safety guidance is intended to help DCNR staff and contractors minimize the risk of exposure to infectious diseases while performing certain essential field duties. These guidelines do not supersede the guidance or direction of state and local health authorities but supplements existing direction from these authorities.

Disposable Protective Gloves

When doing regular work tasks where personnel touch objects that another person may have touched, employees can choose to wear protective gloves or disinfect hands soon after the task is completed. For instance, opening gates in high traffic areas, using hand tools, or lifting a truck tailgate handle that other people may have touched.

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [recommends wearing gloves](#) when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and to dispose of them after each use.
- The CDC [recommends frequent hand washing](#) as one of the best modes of defense to protect yourself, so you should always wash your hands for at least 20 seconds as it is the most effective way to prevent the spread of disease. You should immediately wash your hands when you return from field work before you return to your work area or a common area.
- Keep in mind, when wearing gloves you may still touch contaminated surfaces and spread that on clothing, vehicle interior, phone, and other items you touch regularly. Unless those items are disinfected, cross contamination after removing gloves will occur.
- Use proper technique to remove gloves (right)
 - With the gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off
 - Hold removed glove in gloved hand; slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist, peel off and discard
 - Discard gloves immediately



Face Coverings, Face Shields and Facemasks

On April 3, Governor Wolf recommended that all Pennsylvanians wear a mask if they leave their homes. When used correctly, masks, along with other preventative measures such as hand washing and social distancing, reduce the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus.

When is it Required to Wear a Face Covering or Shield?

- Employees are required to wear masks, coverings or shields while on the work site
- When working near or around the public (i.e. safety or fire patrols), even when practicing social distancing
- When it is necessary to work with others*. Some tasks, such as operating a chainsaw or being on a fire line in active suppression, require employees to work in tandem, or more, to alleviate the risk of and response to personal injury in performing the task.
- Talk to your supervisor if a mask, covering, or shield will significantly impair your vision, compromise job safety, or compromise your physical or mental well-being.

**When alone, an employee may be allowed operate a vehicle or work in a personal office space without wearing a mask, covering, or shield.*

Face Coverings and Face Shields limit the spread of infectious droplets in the air by containing coughs and sneezes. Wearing a dust, cloth or homemade mask will help us cut down on the possibility that we might be infecting an innocent bystander or coworker.

You CAN Reuse a Homemade or Paper Mask.

- Cloth masks should be washed after each use. Cloth masks should not be worn if damp or wet from spit or mucus.
- Paper masks should be placed in a paper bag and stored in a secure location after each shift. The bag should be stapled shut and labeled with name, date used, approximate hours in use.
- For information on Homemade or Paper Mask Best Practices, please see Fact Sheet #8 Masks and Face Coverings

Facemasks (Surgical, N95, or KN95*): N95, KN95, and surgical masks are designed to protect those who are working in high risk situations with a likelihood of exposure. This might include health care providers, emergency responders, rangers or others who are in direct contact with the public and cannot practice social distancing

When is it Required to Wear a Surgical Mask? Staff, such as rangers or other emergency responders, who are in a situation in which social distancing is not possible.

Surgical Masks Can Be Reused, But Shouldn't. Ideally, they should be discarded after each day. If the supply is exhausted, masks should be placed in a paper bag at the end of each shift. The bag should be stapled shut and labeled with name, date, approximate hours in use. Masks should be stored in a secure location.

When is it Required to Wear an N95 or KN95 Mask? When it is apparent staff will be engaging with the public directly and cannot practice social distancing, or anyone working in an emergency medical or law enforcement situation where there is reason to believe an individual is ill or there is the risk of coming into contact with an individual's bodily fluids. N95 or KN95 masks work best without facial hair and should be fit tested.

N95 or KN95* Masks Can Be Reused, But Shouldn't. Ideally, they should be discarded after close encounters with the public. However, due to limited supplies unless a N95 or KN95 mask is damaged, soiled or not functioning properly (poor seal, etc.) they should not be thrown away. If reused:

- Masks should be placed in a paper bag at the end of each shift. The bag should be stapled shut and labeled with name, date, approximate hours in use. Masks should be stored in a secure location.
- If the supply of masks is exhausted, you should begin to re-use the masks, starting with those that offer the greatest period of time between the last use.

**KN95 masks are a suitable alternative when N95 masks are not available. The F.D.A issued an emergency use authorization on 4/3/2020 for KN95 masks, which are almost identical in performance to N95 masks. KN95 masks are produced in China and regulated by the Chinese government.*

When Putting on a Mask:

1. Pick up your mask with washed/sanitized hands, then inspect it for damage.
2. Determine the mask's top side (it has a bendable edge for your nose) and the side that faces your mouth (usually the white/non-colored side).
3. Bring the top part of the mask to your nose level
4. Fasten both ear loops, or the top tie/band on the mask
5. Mold or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose
6. Fasten the bottom tie/band, then pull the bottom of the mask over your mouth

When Removing a Mask:

1. Wash/sanitized your hands before removing your mask
2. Pull off both ear loops at once, or remove the top tie/band before the bottom one
3. Move the mask away from you to remove, then wash/sanitize your hands

Remember: *The outward-facing side of a mask could be contaminated by others, while the side facing your mouth could be contaminated by you!*

Frequently Ask Questions about PPE - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

Please follow all the information provided to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. We will continue to do everything we can to keep our employees informed and safe. For additional information and to stay informed reference the CDC or the Department of Health (DOH) websites.

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