

 		Environment Cleaning Standard Operating Procedure
Title: Module 2: Personal protective equipment		
Authors: Clinical Excellence Commission, Environmental Cleaning Advisory Committee		
Lead: Infection Prevention and Control and Healthcare Associated Infections Program		
Active date: October 2024		Review date: October 2029
Applies to: Health workers undertaking cleaning tasks		Exclusions:
Purpose: This module sets out the routine personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be required by people cleaning in healthcare facilities.		
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Introduction

It is a requirement under both [Cleaning of the Healthcare Environment \(PD2023_018\)](#) and [Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings \(PD2023_025\)](#) that all staff undertaking cleaning are trained in infection control and prevention principles and the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Staff undertaking cleaning are to wear the appropriate PPE for the specific cleaning tasks they are to undertake as per the signage on doors of rooms or areas to be cleaned, or as advised by their cleaning supervisor, the nursing/midwifery unit manager (N/MUM), departmental manager (for example, manager of pathology or radiology) or an infection prevention and control professional (ICP).

Staff should always follow instructions on the signage on doors of patient rooms with transmission-based precautions in place.

After use, PPE should be cleaned, stored or discarded, as required.

Gloves

Disposable gloves

Do:

- use for housekeeping activities, such as dispensing chemicals
- perform hand hygiene immediately before putting on and after removing gloves
- change gloves for each task
- discard in appropriate waste stream.

Reusable occupational protective gloves (for example, leather gloves)

Do:

- use for waste handling
- perform hand hygiene immediately before putting on and after removing gloves
- clean gloves as per the manufacturer's instructions
- discard when peeled, cracked, discoloured, torn or punctured.

Change and/or discard gloves

Do:

- as soon as they are torn or punctured or when the integrity has been altered
- after completing a cleaning procedure
- before touching surfaces such as door handles, touching equipment not used in the cleaning procedure
- if concerned that the gloves have become contaminated.

Do not:

- use alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) to clean gloves
- wear the same pair of disposable gloves after cleaning individual patient area

- wear gloves after cleaning has been completed.

Respiratory and facial protective equipment¹

Consider the use of a face shield to ensure the protection for both the mouth and eyes.

Mask

Do:

- change the mask if it becomes moist or damp
- change the mask if it is sprayed or splashed on
- change the mask if contaminated with blood or body fluids
- immediately perform hand hygiene if the mask is accidentally touched
- perform hand hygiene after removing a mask
- place the mask into a general waste bin, perform hand hygiene and replace with a new mask
- report mask pressure injuries to the supervisor or manager, following local reporting processes and usual WHS processes
- remove mask outside of patient care areas or patients requiring other precautions (for example, between rooms or patient zones, break room, reception).

Do not:

- touch the mask or face, as this may contaminate the wearer
- pull the mask below the nose or chin
- hang the mask around the neck, ear or top of the head.

Eye Protection – goggles, face shields

Do:

- perform hand hygiene before putting on
- put on and fit according to the manufacturer's instructions
- clean reusable eyewear according to the manufacturer's instructions
- inspect reusable eyewear to ensure it is clean and dry and in working order before storage
- discard single-use eyewear immediately after removal
- perform hand hygiene after removing protective eyewear.

Do not:

- re-use single-use eyewear
- have eyewear hanging around the neck or on top of the head.

Gown/apron²

Do:

- perform hand hygiene before putting on
- discard gown/apron immediately after removal
- perform hand hygiene after removing the gown/apron.

Do not:

- wear gowns/aprons after cleaning task has been completed.

Head cover

A head cover should be worn when cleaning operating theatres.

Do:

- discard head cover immediately after using.

Do not:

- wear the head cover after cleaning has been completed.

Boots/shoe covers

Boots or shoe covers should be worn when cleaning operating theatres or a trauma room.

Do:

- discard boot/shoe covers immediately after removing them
- perform hand hygiene after removing boots/shoe covers.

Do not:

- wear boots or shoe covers after cleaning has been completed.

Sequence for putting on and removing PPE³

Recommended practice for putting on and removing PPE should be in the following sequence:

Putting on *in this order**

- perform hand hygiene
- gown or apron
- mask/respirator
- eye protection
- perform hand hygiene
- gloves



Removing *in this order**

- gloves
- perform hand hygiene
- gown or apron
- perform hand hygiene
- eye protection (if reusable, clean immediately)
- perform hand hygiene
- mask/respirator
- perform hand hygiene

**Some items of PPE may be required; for example, boots and shoe covers, and the combination of PPE will affect the sequence. Perform hand hygiene if hands become contaminated during any step.*

¹ See section 7.3.2 on respiratory and facial protection and 7.3.4 on respirators in [Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings \(PD2023_025\)](#).

² See section 7.3.6 on gowns and aprons in [Infection Prevention and Control in Healthcare Settings \(PD2023_025\)](#).

³ See section 4.3 on personal protective equipment in [Infection Prevention and Control Practice Handbook](#).