

EYE PROTECTION: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Updated: June 22, 2021

The following are questions and answers regarding eye protection during the COVID-19 pandemic within Island Health. This document will be added to/updated as information becomes available. Send your questions to pandemic@viha.ca.

- NEW QUESTION & ANSWER
- RECENT QUESTION & ANSWER (FROM 1 PREVIOUS VERSION OF FAQ)
- UPDATED RESPONSE

General Eye Protection Questions that apply to all areas of work and care environments

1. **RECENT:** Wearing eye protection, does this apply to me?

As an Island Health staff member, you are expected to wear PPE that is appropriate for your area of work and care environment. Using eye protection should be a decision based on Occupational Health and Safety and Island Health's infection Prevention & Control principles of best practice, to protect yourself and others. All staff and providers are required to wear eye protection with their medical-grade mask when within 2 meters of a patient or client.

If you are working in a setting where the environment is uncontrolled and you may need to respond quickly (e.g., ED or a client's home), or where a person may approach you for care or assistance at any time, you may find it necessary to wear eye protection for prolonged periods.

For all Island Health Staff, refer to [PPE During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) to further inform your eye protection use. If your work environment is not described in that document, please contact your leader.

2. What are examples of acceptable eye protection (in addition to a medical-grade mask)?

A full face shield that covers the front and sides of the face, or well-fitting goggles. Based on your care setting, you may have access to one or the other. If you have particular requirements, please discuss with your leader.

- Full face shields include coverage of the whole face, and protection of an extended-wear medical-grade mask or respirator from contamination.
- Goggles are easier to store and transport, depending on your care area.

It is important to use the PPE and eye protection provided *by* your place of work, *at* that place of work.

Note: Prescription eyeglasses or safety glasses with gaps between the glasses and the face are not sufficient to protect from all splashes or droplet spray and thus are **NOT** considered adequate protection in complying with WorkSafeBC requirements.

3. Where do I order the reusable face shields, visors and goggles?

Please refer to the [Supplemental PPE Ordering Guide](#) and the [Eye Protection Ordering Guide](#).

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4. How can I prevent my face shield, visor or goggles from fogging?

Anti-fog products may be used on face shields, visors and goggles, and can be ordered by Direct Purchase. See the [Eye Protection Ordering Guide](#) for ordering information.

5. What if I require prescription goggles?

Discuss with your leader/manager, who can reach out to Occupational Health and Safety for support in ordering.

6. How can I clean and disinfect face shields, visors and goggles? What about the straps?

Refer to these two documents on the *COVID-19: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)* Intranet page for cleaning and disinfecting instructions, including the straps.

- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection in the Absence of Water](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection \(with water\)](#)

7. When do I need to remove, clean and disinfect my eye protection?

Clean and disinfect your eye protection and mask each time you remove them. Refer to [PPE During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) for removal considerations specific to your care area.

8. How long can I use a single face shield with attached foam?

In settings where you can wash the face shield with [soap and water](#), let it dry, and store it safely away from contamination, it can be used for a prolonged periods while the foam is clean and intact.

If this is not possible, it is safe to wear this type of face shield while the foam is intact and not soiled, for up to one day/shift, as long as you clean all surfaces frequently, using the appropriate disinfectant wipes.

When a face shield shows any signs of degrading (of the foam or visual field distortion) it should be disposed of.

9. If I am wearing a face shield, do I need to wear a mask as well?

Yes. Face shields do not replace masks or face coverings. Face shields protect the eyes of the person wearing it. Using a face shield without a mask won't protect:

- You from potentially inhaling infectious respiratory droplets exhaled by others, or
- Others from your infectious respiratory droplets, as they can escape around the face shield.

Please refer to Island Health's [Mask Policy](#) for details on what type of mask to wear in which environment.

10. **NEW:** Do I need to wear a full face shield as well as a medical grade mask when I am helping my clients with a shower?

If showering clients, it is advised that you wear a full face shield to protect the fluid resistance of your medical grade mask.

11. I have used my visor several times and after cleaning it and letting it dry, there is a film left. What should I do?

Refer to [Cleaning and Disinfection Instructions for Eye/Facial Protection \(with water\)](#) to find information on when and how to remove any residue, using an alcohol pad. Ensure the visor is Island Health-distributed.

12. What wipes do we use for cleaning and disinfecting goggles?

Please see the [Eye Protection Ordering Guide](#) for information on eye protection cleaning and disinfecting

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products (**Please note:** Honeywell anti-fog wipes do **not** meet Health Canada standards for cleaning and disinfecting.)

13. My face shield cuts into my forehead. Can I add bits of foam to the face shield to prevent skin damage?

No. PPE is **NOT** to be modified.

By adding foam to the PPE, it could change the integrity of the equipment and put you at risk. Please speak with your leader if you are having issues with the fit, and they can connect with Occupational Health and Safety for further support. Refer to [Prevention & Treatment Recommendations: Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Skin Injury](#) for more information.

14. Does Island Health have sufficient supply of cleaning and disinfecting wipes for cleaning eye protection before and after use?

Yes. Current supply is sufficient. When there is a change to the supply chain, alternatives will be sourced through the Provincial Working Group.

NOTE: For CHS – when transferring wipes from the original container you must ensure cleanliness. When transporting wipes not in their original container you must protect wipes from light, to maintain integrity of product.

If you need further assistance:

Please discuss with your leader as to which section of the [PPE Required During COVID-19 Pandemic](#) document most closely aligns with your area.