Guidance for Enhanced PPE for Close-Up, Person-to-Person Interactions in Research (May 28, 2021, Update in Red)

There is increasing evidence that the highest attack rate for the virus that causes COVID-19 occurs during close-up, person-to-person interactions for extended periods (< 6 ft separation, > 15 min). The use of enhanced PPE mitigates this risk for individuals who must work in close proximity to one another, as is sometimes necessary in research spaces. Common examples from the Research Space and Shared User Facility SOPs include: user training on instruments, equipment maintenance, and work with human subjects.

The following guidance must be followed for all activities that require individuals to work in close proximity (< 6 ft separation) for more than a few minutes:

- Limit activities to the minimum time required with maximum allowable separation between individuals. When possible, break multi hour-long activities into several shorter segments.
- Limit training activities to the instructor and one researcher whenever possible. Disinfect instruments before and after use.
- Perform software training remotely using TeamViewer or a similar screen sharing application.

In addition to the above guidance, the following enhanced PPE must be used by all of the individuals participating in close-up research activities.

**Required Enhanced PPE:**

**Level 1 Disposable Surgical Mask**

- Medical masks reduce the transmission of respiratory droplets to others and block other potentially infectious materials from the skin, mouth, or nose. Level 1 Disposable Surgical Face Masks must be worn at all times during the close-up activity; cloth face masks are not suitable. In some cases, a respirator (such as an N95) may be used instead of a level-1 surgical mask (see below: “N-95 respirators in research”).
- Medical masks should not be reused. These masks are an essential COVID-19 supply that should be ordered through regular purchasing methods using Ariba catalog suppliers or from a Fisher Scientific campus storeroom. Shared user facilities and core labs will provide disposable medical masks to users on-site as needed.

**Face Shield**

- Face shields provide barrier protection to the facial area and the eyes, nose, and lips. **Face shields are not required, but can be worn as an additional layer of protection.** They do not provide primary respiratory protection, and must be used in conjunction with a medical mask or a respirator (see “N-95 respirators in research” for instances when a respirator should be used). Face shields should cover the forehead, extend below the chin, and wrap around the sides of the face.
- Individuals are encouraged to have an individual face shield for their personal use only and should follow manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning. Shared user facilities and core labs will stock a limited number of reusable face shields for occasional use, and these will be thoroughly cleaned after each use. Face shields are an essential COVID-19
Disposable nitrile gloves protect your hands from potential exposure to infectious materials. However, once contaminated, gloves can spread infectious materials to you, others, and surfaces. Therefore, the way you use gloves can influence the risk of transmission. Gloves are not recommended for use in public spaces.

Nitrile gloves should be disposed of appropriately after a single use. These gloves are an essential COVID-19 supply that should be ordered through regular purchasing methods using Ariba catalog suppliers or from a Fisher Scientific campus storeroom. Shared user facilities and core labs will provide gloves to users on-site as needed.

In addition to the required enhanced PPE described above, the following enhanced PPE may also be used optionally when considered appropriate by lab PIs:

Lab Coat/Disposable Gown (optional, if not already used)

- Lab coats and/or disposable polypropylene isolation gowns are already used in many research laboratory settings. If lab coats (or disposable gowns) are worn, they should fully cover the torso, fit comfortably over the body, and have long sleeves.

- Cloth lab coats should be laundered on a routine basis at a university approved facility or vendor. Cloth lab coats should be autoclaved before laundering if they have been worn in a BSL-2 laboratory or worn by or around persons infected with COVID-19. Autoclave conditions: Gravity, 122 degrees C, ≥30 minutes sterilization time. Disposable gowns should be used for up to one day and then disposed of in an appropriate waste container. An alternative strategy is to use a combination of cloth lab coats and disposable polypropylene isolation gowns, following the same laundering or disposal guidelines as above.

N95 Respirators in Research

N95 respirators are not necessary to ensure the safety of individuals in most research settings. In addition, overuse of N95 respirators can divert supplies from areas where the need is critical. Use of N95 respirators in research should be limited to the following situations:

- Research involving confirmed positive, presumed positive COVID-19 individuals or samples.
- Disinfection activities with a COVID-19 positive research area.
- Medical use, including any virus testing.
- To protect vulnerable Purdue populations assessed as category 3 or higher.
- Anywhere that previous N95 respirator use was required by a PPE hazard assessment.

N95 respirator use requires enrollment in Purdue’s respiratory protection program, N95 mask fitting by the respiratory protection program and approval by Radiological and Environmental Management. Please contact Joshua Brown (brow1422@purdue.edu) at REM for further guidance.
Obtaining Essential COVID-19 Supplies:

- Procurement Services is working with campus stakeholders and vendor partners to identify and obtain essential supplies required to meet enhanced COVID-19 safety measures (e.g., face masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, ethanol, and gloves). For research purposes, there are currently two methods to order essential COVID-19 supplies:
  - Level-1 disposable surgical face masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes should be ordered through regular purchasing methods using Ariba catalog suppliers or from a Fisher Scientific campus storeroom. Costs will be assessed to the ordering department and orders will be shipped and delivered to the recipient.
  - Purple nitrile gloves, ethanol, alcohol, anti-fog spray and anti-fog wipes can be ordered from the Fisher storerooms. COVID-19 specific supplies ordered from the Fisher storerooms can be charged to the PIs department COVID-IO account. The COVID-IO account will be used to track expenses associated with COVID-19 specific safety measures that may be fully or partially reimbursed by future federal support.
  - Face shields can be acquired using the [Face Shield Order Form](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/emergency-considerations-ppe.html). Once you complete the order form, you will receive instructions for pick-up.

- If essential COVID-19 supplies are not available through the Fisher storerooms, researchers may order supplies on their own and charge the cost to their department COVID-IO account. These costs will be reimbursed from central resources as funds become available.

- Other equipment and supplies required as part of normal operations should be purchased and cost allocated in the usual manner.

- Additional information on procuring COVID-19 supplies can be found [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/non-us-settings/emergency-considerations-ppe.html).