

PPE Compliance Tips

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a variety of barriers used alone or in combination to protect mucous membranes, skin and clothing from contact with pathogens. This includes gloves, gowns, face protection, and respiratory protection.

There are multiple factors when determining the appropriate selection of PPE for a particular task. These include the:

- Type of exposure anticipated (e.g., splash/spray vs. touch)
- Volume of fluid or tissue to which there is a potential exposure
- Likelihood of exposure
- Probable route of exposure (e.g., direct contact vs. inhalation)
- Need for transmission-based precautions

Gloves are worn when there is direct contact with blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or potentially contaminated surfaces or equipment. Remember that gloves are not a substitute for good hand hygiene and hand hygiene must be performed before and after wearing gloves.

Gowns protect clothing and exposed body areas from contamination from blood, body fluids and other potentially infectious material. Gowns should fully cover the torso from the neck to the knees, arms to the end of the wrists and wrap around the back for maximum coverage.

Face protection comes in the form of facemasks, goggles, and face shields and protect the face from contamination with blood, body fluids, and other potentially infectious materials that could generate splashes or sprays during certain tasks.

Respiratory protection is usually in the form of face masks in their simplest forms to higher level respirators such as a N95 or higher level mask. These help protect by preventing inhalation of pathogens transmitted by the airborne route.

Compliance with PPE is vital in protecting residents and staff to exposure to pathogens and decreasing the risk of transmission of those pathogens to each other. Consider these following tips to ensure compliance with PPE.

- Facilities should make sure that they are well-equipped with PPE supplies to ensure that staff have the proper equipment needed to conduct resident care and prevent transmission of pathogens.
- Routinely check par levels of PPE equipment and restock PPE equipment when par levels fall below normal.
- Have contingency plans in place if shortages of PPE can be expected.
- Ensure that staff are knowledgeable about the proper procedures and order when donning and doffing PPE and educate accordingly.
- Educate staff on transmission-based precautions and the appropriate PPE to be used with each precaution.

- Ensure that residents understand and are educated about PPE if they have to wear it for certain situations.
- Ensure that visitors, vendors, and others coming into the building are educated on PPE requirements and compliance with wearing while in the facility, as needed.
- Ensure that PPE in stock is in good condition, free of defects or damages, and that damaged products are removed from use.

The Compliance Store

Because Getting It Right Matters.