Clinical Strong Practice (CSP)

Types of Respirators and Masks Available in the Health Care Setting for COVID-19

Practice Purpose

This document describes what types of masks and respirators are preferable for staff and providers to use in the health care setting for respiratory protection. The purpose of this document is to provide information about the various types of respiratory protection available in VA facilities to protect health care providers (HCPs) from exposure while caring for COVID-19 patients.

This document is subject to update based on emerging guidelines.

Sources

- 1. Infectious Diseases Society of America Guidelines on Infection Prevention for Health Care Personnel Caring for Patients with Suspected or Known COVID-19. Infection Diseases Society of America. www.idsociety.org/COVID19guidelines/ip
- 2. NIOSH-Approved Particulate Filtering Facepiece Respirators. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/disp_part/default.html
- 3. Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of Facemasks. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/face-masks.html
- 4. Infographic Understanding the Difference, Surgical Mask, N95 Respirator. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/UnderstandDifferenceInfographic-508.pdf
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings. Centers for Disease Control. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-controlrecommendations.html



This COVID Strong Practice was developed in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic to enable VHA to adapt quickly for the benefit of Veteran and employee health. Do you have feedback on this practice or would you like to submit a practice for consideration as a Clinical Strong Practice? Please email us here VHAClinicalStrongPractices@va.gov

Last Updated: May 14, 2020

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Air Purifying Respirators

- The type of Air Purifying Respirator used by the HCP depends on availability at facility and local decisions
- Additional PPE (e.g. eye protection and/or face shield, gown, gloves) is to be worn in conjunction with the respirators listed here All respirators listed below provide at least equivalent protection to N95 filtering facepiece respirators
- All respirators listed below require fit-testing or medical evaluation in accordance with OSHA standards
- Respirators with exhalation valves are NOT used for the care of COVID-19 patients and do NOT provide source control. Do NOT use if a sterile field must be maintained; valve allows unfiltered exhaled air onto sterile field. In rare circumstances, if no other respirators available, cover respirators with an exhalation valve with a surgical mask and face shield to protect others; the wearer may be an asymptomatic carrier

In a contingency or crisis scenario, it is acceptable to use reprocessed respirators, to extend use, or reuse respirators in conjunction with appropriate additional PPE and face shield using CDC guidelines

Appropriate Setting

Use when performing or present

Use when an HCP enters the room

suspected COVID-19. If available,

for aerosol generating

of a patient with known or

respirators are preferred1

procedures¹

COVID

PPE

Model[^]

N95 or higher

Facepiece (FFP)

Respirators

Industrial

N95s

R95,

R99,

R100

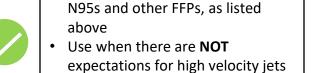
P95,

P99,

P100

Surgical N95s

Filtering



Use in clinical settings as other

N95s and other FFPs, as listed

Use in clinical settings as other

N95s and other FFPs, as listed

Use in clinical settings as other

N95s and other FFPs, as listed

as splashes or sprays¹

facemask may be worn if a respirator is not available. When available, respirators are preferred

Face shields used should cover the entire front (that extends to the chin or below) and sides of the face

Not all respirators will look identical to respirator pictured. Check closely; masks and respirators can look similar

aerosol generating procedure (AGP) and/or when entering the room of suspected or known COVID-19 patient. A

Provides protection against high-

pressure jets of fluid hazards, such

or splashes of blood

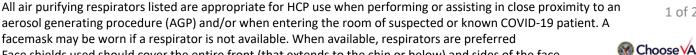
above

above

above

Use in clinical settings as other

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Other Considerations

Occupational Safety and Health

(NIOSH) approved N95 or higher

FFPs can be identified with the

NIOSH Certification stamped or

embossed on the respirator²

Provides equal protection as the

NIOSH approved facepiece

respirators and is at least as

protective as the N95²

Same guidelines as R series

respirators listed above

If surgical N95 respirators are **NOT** available and there is a risk

of exposure to high velocity

splashes/sprays of blood or

should be worn over the standard N95 respirator¹

body fluids, then a face shield+

standard N95 or higher filtering facepiece respirator: has same

National Institute for

filtering capability²

* See below

See below

See below

* See below

See Below

Air Purifying Respirators (Continued)

Use in clinical setting where the consideration of a sterile field is **NOT**

infectious to the patient

protection

½ Mask does **NOT** offer eye

Full mask offers eye protection

Appropriate Setting

a concern and if the clinician is NOT

Model[^]

Elastomeric

Respirator
• ½ Mask

Cloth

Masks/Cloth

Face Coverings

Full Mask

PPE

Except

for AGPs

Not

COVID

PPE

Powered Air Purifying Respirators (PAPRs)		Use in clinical setting where the consideration of a sterile field is NOT a concern and if the clinician is NOT infectious to the patient	There are many different configurations of PAPRs
 Medical Face Masks Use for transmission-based precautions/isolation for Droplet, Contact Precautions (NOT airborne)⁴ Does NOT provide protection from inhaling particles generated by AGPs⁴ 			
Procedure Masks/Isolation Masks	Except for AGPs	 Use for general health care procedures, non-AGPs Use for respiratory etiquette Use for Droplet Precautions 	 May not provide protection against splashes and sprays; if anticipated, a face shield+ over procedure mask is recommended³
Surgical Masks		 Same use as procedure masks/isolation masks (see above) Food and Drug Administration (FDA)- cleared surgical masks are designed 	In contingency or crisis scenarios, may use in conjunction with face shield for AGPs if there is a

to protect against splashes and

Other Face Coverings

wearer; intended to protect others.

important if someone is infected but

NOT intended to protect the

does not have symptoms³

Capability to protect HCP is

unknown. Caution should be

exercised when considering use³

May prevent the spread of virus

from the wearer to others. This is

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Other Considerations*

reused almost indefinitely.

The filter is inside the hard

shortage of respirators per

For source control; NOT

In contingency or crisis

of universal masking to

protect from

shield+3

scenarios, may use as part

asymptomatic carriers, in

conjunction with face

IDSA guidelines+1

PPE³

Hard case filters can be

decontaminated and

casing

sprays¹