

# Safe Operating Practice

## Safe Use of Common Areas During COVID-19

Disinfect any surface you are intending to use



Use of Common Areas



Disinfect all touched surfaces

Workers must be trained/competent and aware of associated hazards. Use the "Take Ten" tool if needed. Trainees must work under supervision.

**This SOP describes the practice for use of common areas such as lunch room, hallways, photocopy rooms, mail rooms, rest room, supply room, etc. and mandatory wearing a face mask in the common area of the office/workplace as of November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for all of Saskatchewan.**

**Potential Injuries:** Potential exposure to any harmful viruses (i.e. COVID-19)

**Potential P&E Incidents:** n/a

**Mandatory CSA Approved PPE:** n/a

**Mandatory Hygiene Protection Gears:**

Non-Medical/Cloth Mask (reusable)  
(Recommendation is to use three layers' cloth mask)

**Recommended CSA Approved PPE and Hygiene protection gears:** Gloves

**Tools & Equipment:** Disinfectant spray, (Clorox, Lysol, Fantastik, Spray 9 Industrial, etc.)

**Definition:** Office/Workplace includes office, cubicle, shop bay, etc.

**Best Practice:**

1. Workplaces are exempt from the restriction that have been put on indoor and outdoor gatherings. However, social distancing (two-metre) distancing between individuals must be maintained all the time;
2. Limit the exchange of papers (e.g. signing contracts). If documents must be exchanged, leave them on a clean surface while maintaining a two-metre distance. Avoid sharing pens and office equipment. Disinfect after each use;
3. Commonly touched areas and shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected before and after use, or when visibly soiled. These include light switches, door handles, taps, handrails, countertops, mobile devices, keyboards, photocopiers, micro waves, fridges, sinks, cupboards, etc.;
4. Maintain social distancing of two metres (lunch room, photocopier room, etc.);
5. Employees must follow all directional signage in place in the workplace (for one-way traffic in congested hallways and walking areas etc.);
6. Follow established protocols to maintain social distancing and cleaning and disinfecting protocols in elevators. Work with your manager to have staggering start times if possible to avoid congestion at ground level, use stairs if possible.

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- **Effective Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020** all MoH employees must wear a face mask when they are away from their workstation (e.g. office, cubicle, shop bay). This includes all common areas, such as hallways, elevators, meeting rooms, shared spaces, bathrooms, etc.
- Remember: Face mask is not a PPE; they are an additional layer of hygiene protection.
- MoH will provide cloth face mask (reusable) or/and non surgical face mask to employee.
- Remember "Face shield" is not an alternative of a face mask.

### **How to use and Clean your cloth mask properly**

When worn properly, a person wearing a non-medical mask or face covering can reduce the spread of his or her own infectious respiratory droplets.

Non-medical face masks or face coverings should:

- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- maintain their shape after washing and drying
- be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- be made of at least 2 layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

Some masks also include a pocket to accommodate a paper towel or disposable coffee filter, for increased benefit.

Non-medical masks or face coverings shall:

- not be shared with others
- not impair vision or interfere with tasks
- not be placed on children under the age of 2 years
- not be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials
- not be secured with tape or other inappropriate materials
- not be made exclusively of materials that easily fall apart, such as tissues
- not be placed on anyone unable to remove them without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing

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### Cleaning and Sanitizing non-medical masks and face coverings

Cloth masks or face coverings should be changed and cleaned if they become damp or soiled. You can wash your cloth mask by:

- putting it directly into the washing machine, using a hot cycle, and then dry thoroughly
- washing it thoroughly by hand if a washing machine is not available, using soap and warm/hot water
- allow it to dry completely before wearing it again

Non-medical masks that cannot be washed should be disposed of properly in a lined garbage bin, and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled or crumpled.

### Limitations

Masks have limitations and in order to use a mask safely, you must do the following:

- Wash your hands immediately before putting it on and immediately after taking it off (in addition to practicing good hand hygiene while wearing it);
- Mask should fit well, fully cover nose, mouth and chin area with no gaping; and,
- Do not share mask with others.

Masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by hands.

- Avoid moving the mask around or adjusting it often.
- Change the mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled.

Homemade masks are not medical devices and are not regulated like medical masks and respirators:

- they have not been tested to recognized standards
- the fabrics are not the same as used in surgical masks or respirators
- the edges are not designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth

These types of masks may not be effective in blocking virus particles that may be transmitted by coughing, sneezing or certain medical procedures. They do not provide complete protection from virus particles because of a potential loose fit and the materials used.

Some commercially available masks have exhalation valves that make the mask more breathable for the person wearing it, but these valves also allow infectious respiratory droplets to spread outside the mask.

**Masks with exhalation valves are not recommended, because they don't protect others from COVID-19 and don't limit the spread of the virus.**

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Medical masks, including surgical, medical procedure face masks and respirators (like N95 masks), must be kept for health care workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients. Cloth Reusable masks are preferred but if you do not have access to a reusable mask, you may use a disposable non-surgical mask.

### Related SOPs:

Cleaning and Disinfecting for Equipment

[Taskroom – COVID -19](#)

### Related Manuals/Policies:

SPM –WHMIS – 900

### Related Training

WHMIS 2015

### Poster:

**Wearing a Mask is Mandatory**

It is mandatory that individuals wear a non-medical mask in this building. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Moving through common/shared spaces
- Elevators
- Hallways and doorways
- Bathrooms

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