

Resources for non-health care community settings: Understanding when personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed

Guidance from Public Health Ontario and the Public Health Agency of Canada indicate personal protective equipment (PPE) should be used when directly caring for an individual who is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. The use of PPE should be based on organizational Occupational Health and Safety protocols and on a risk assessment that considers the risk of a specific activity and characteristics of the source of the infection.

Recommendations for workplaces and other non-health care settings are to implement appropriate hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, infection prevention and control measures, and social (physical) distancing to protect the safety of staff, volunteers, and clients.

On April 6, the Public Health Agency indicated that the use of non-medical (cloth) masks can be effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19 however have not yet proven effective in protecting the person wearing it. Agencies should refer to specific information available from the Public Health Agency of Canada including [COVID-19 Prevention and Risks](#) and [Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health Communication on the Use of Non-Medical Masks](#). On April 8, Toronto's Medical Officer of Health reiterated this [guidance on the use of non-medical masks](#).

The following resources developed by the City of Toronto, Province of Ontario, and Government of Canada provide information on when PPE is and is not required and how services can be redesigned to protect the health and safety of staff, volunteers and clients and reduce the need for PPE.

City of Toronto resources:

- [COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces / Businesses and Employers](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Community-Based Service Settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Food Banks and Donation Centres](#)
- [COVID-19 Interim Guidance for Homelessness Service Settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Tips for Homelessness Service Setting Providers](#)
- [Infection Prevention & Control Resources for Homelessness Service Settings](#)
- [Toronto Public Health Pandemic Plan: A Planning Guide for Housing Service Providers and Shelters](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for the Use of Face Masks and Coverings by the Public](#)
- [Should I Wear a Cloth Mask?](#)
- [How to Safely Wear a Mask](#)
- [How to Self-Isolate \(for people with symptoms\)](#)
- [How to Self-Isolate \(for people with no symptoms\)](#)

- [Strategies to Increase Physical Distancing and Spread Reduction for Community Partners](#)

Province of Ontario resources:

- [Ministry of Health Guidance for Health and Other Sectors](#)
- [COVID-19: When and How to Wear a Mask, Recommendations for the General Public](#)
- [Recommended Steps: Putting on Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Group Home and Co-Living Settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Homeless Shelters](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Home and Community Care Providers](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: Consumption and Treatment Services \(CST\) Sites](#)

Government of Canada resources:

- [Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health Communication: Use of Non-Medical Masks by the Public \(news release\)](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Prevention and Risks](#)
- [Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace: Employers, Employees and Essential Service Workers](#)