

COVID-19: Working in Close Contact (less than 2 metres of others)

The University has enhanced personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for those who are at higher risk of exposure because of their work situation. **Faculty, staff and students who must work in close contact, within less than 2 metres of others, are required to wear a medical mask and eye protection (face shield or goggles).**

Face shields or goggles are not recommended for use by drivers in vehicles. The use of eye protection (face shields or goggles) and other personal protective equipment (PPE) has already been established for certain employee groups in specific work settings with close contact with others and/or potential positive cases. These employees must follow established PPE requirements for their work areas and tasks.

The University's COVID-19 existing precautions and PPE requirements have been determined in consultation with the local public health unit and in accordance with provincial and federal COVID-19 recommendations. These enhancements are intended to strengthen existing precautions, recognizing the increased transmissibility of the COVID-19 variants.

Other measures also continue to be prioritized, including vaccination, self-screening, cleaning and disinfecting high frequency contact surfaces, practicing proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Medical Masks

[Medical masks](#) [1] refer collectively to "Surgical masks", "Isolation masks" or "Procedural masks". Medical masks used in Canada and the United States are typically classified by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) as "Level 1", "Level 2" and "Level 3".

Many commercially available "non-medical disposable masks" have a similar appearance to medical masks, but they have not been evaluated or tested to ASTM standards and are therefore considered to be "non-medical masks".

It is difficult to distinguish between "medical masks" and "non-medical disposable masks" by appearance since medical masks typically do not come with markings on the mask itself. To confirm if a mask is a "medical mask", check the original box for specific wording: "ASTM" AND "Level 1", "Level 2" or "Level 3".

The specifications for medical masks are as below:

Test	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Bacterial Filtration Efficiency, %	?95	?98	?98
Differential Pressure mm H₂O/cm² (Pa/cm²)	<5.0	<6.0	<6.0
Submicron particulate filtration efficiency at 0.1 micron, %	?95	?98	?98
Splash Resistance/Synthetic Blood Resistance, mmHg	80	120	160
Flame Spread	Class 1	Class 1	Class 1
Microbial Cleanliness (cfu/g)	N/A	N/A	N/A

From: <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/specifications-for-COVID-19-products#200> [2]

Use of Medical Masks – Fit

As with any face covering, proper use and fit to the face continues to be an important factor. When worn, a medical mask should:

- completely cover the nose, mouth, and chin without gaping
- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head
- fit comfortably to avoid frequently adjustment

Use of Medical Masks – Other Considerations

- Refer “[COVID-19: Guidance for Using Medical Masks \[3\]](#)” on EHS website or “[How to Wear a Face Mask \[4\]](#)” for additional general information on how to wear a medical mask.
- Medical masks are disposable and must be discarded following use.
- Do not use a medical mask that is ripped, visibly soiled or wet or if the ear loops are damaged.
- Change your mask when it becomes damp.
- Do not re-use or share medical masks.

Eye Protection

Goggles

Goggles provide effective barrier protection for the eyes against splashes, sprays, and respiratory droplets. The lens is typically made of plastic, commonly polycarbonate, with an adjustable elastic strap to allow snug fit around the eyes. Goggles are typically reusable.

Considerations for wearing goggles

- Goggles should fit snugly over and around the eyes or prescription eyeglasses.
- Goggles with anti-fog coating are preferred to help maintain clarity of vision.
- Indirectly-vented or non-vented goggles provide better protection against splashes and sprays than directly-vented goggles.
- The wearer should ensure that the goggles and the mask are compatible with each other so that there is no interference with the proper positioning of the goggles or with the fit or seal of the mask.
- Goggles should be worn after putting on a mask and taken off before removing a mask.
- Goggles must be cleaned and disinfected between uses in accordance with manufacturer’s instructions. Instructions on cleaning and disinfecting eye protection is available in the [Protective Eyewear Guidance \[5\]](#) on the EHS COVID-19 Guidelines Website.

Face Shields

A [face shield \[6\]](#) is personal protective equipment that has a transparent window or visor supported in front of the face, serving as a barrier to protect the wearer’s eyes and face. Face shields do not replace masks but can be worn in addition to a mask to provide eye protection.

Considerations for wearing a face shield

- Safety goggles may be used in place of a face shield where eye protection is required
- Face shields must cover the forehead, extend below the chin and cover the sides of the face
- A face shield that is not CSA-approved must not be used if the job task requires Canadian Standards Association (CSA)-approved safety glasses or goggles
- The material used for the visor (i.e., part of the face shield that covers the face) needs to be impenetrable by splashes, sprays, and spatter of body fluids.
- Wearing the face shield must not create a health hazard (e.g., skin irritation, allergic reaction, etc.) or a

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- safety hazard (e.g., poor visibility, sharp edges, etc.) of its own
- The face shield must be adequately replaced, cleaned, and/or disinfected.
- Re-useable face shields must be cleaned and disinfected between uses in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Instructions on cleaning and disinfecting eye protection is available in the [Protective Eyewear Guidance](#) [5] on the EHS COVID-19 Guidelines Website.

Medical masks, goggles and face shields are available through the [Physical Resources Stockroom](#) [7].

Resources

Face Shields for Source Control of COVID-19. Public Health Ontario [Focus On: Face Shields as Source Control \(publichealthontario.ca\)](#) [6] July 16, 2020.

COVID-19 (coronavirus) and workplace health and safety. Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) and workplace health and safety | Ontario.ca](#) [8]

COVID-19 medical mask and respirators: Information for health professionals. Health Canada. [COVID-19 medical masks and respirators: Information for health professionals - Canada.ca](#) [1]

COVID-19 mask use: types of masks and respirators. Government of Canada. [Types of Masks and Respirators](#) [9]

Source URL: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/covid-19-working-close-contact-less-2-metres-others>

Links

[1] <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment/medical-masks-respirators/health-professionals.html#a2> [2] <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/specifications-for-COVID-19-products#200> [3] <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-24> [4] http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf [5] <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms/ehs-21> [6] <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/main/2020/07/covid-19-face-shields-source-control.pdf?la=en> [7] <https://www.pr.uoguelph.ca/signage-and-hygiene-supplies-covid-19> [8] <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-coronavirus-and-workplace-health-and-safety> [9] <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/types-masks-respirators/types-masks-respirators.pdf>