

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL COVID-19 COMMITTEE

Bulletin #91c – COVID-19 – ID-IPC – Mask Guidance – Nov 30 2020

Face masks for health care workers use during COVID-19

Last week, the Regional Infectious Diseases Infection Prevention and Control (ID-IPC) COVID-19 Committee updated the guidance related to Horizon's [face mask for health care workers use during COVID-19](#). These updates reflect research on best practices and Health Canada recommendations related to personal protective equipment (PPE).

The update ensures all health care workers (HCW) in Horizon facilities have access to the mask required for their working conditions. Currently, some HCWs are using a Level 3 mask when an approved Level 1 mask meets standards.

Prior to this change, a variety of different masks were being used across the organization, some of which no longer meet current standards.

We have not downgraded PPE for employees and physicians.

Now all HCWs are supplied with American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) masks. Health Canada and the World Health Organization advise that ASTM level face masks (1 to 3) are fluid resistant medical grade face masks and are safe for use when providing care to suspect / confirmed COVID-19 patients.

All masks worn across the organization now meet the specifications required by the ASTM standards and are accessible to HCWs to be used for the proper indication following the HCW's Point of Care Risk Assessment.

The protective level of the mask required for each situation will continue to be available. When Level 2 or 3 medical face masks are required for higher risk procedures such as Operating Room Theatres, the Emergency Department, Intensive Care Units and some outpatient clinics (Ambulatory care), they will be available.

Any face masks in stock in Horizon facilities that do not meet the ASTM standards are now considered non-medical face coverings.

Horizon's ID-IPC COVID-19 Committee is working diligently to ensure Horizon's practices continue align with evolving national standards and other jurisdictions across the country.

Your safety and the safety of our patients and communities has been and remains Horizon's number one focus.

Thank you for your continued diligence, as we work through the ongoing outbreak. We know proper mask use and hand hygiene are instrumental in the fight against COVID-19.

If you have any questions about accessing PPE, please contact your manager.