

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Advice for staff having face-to-face contact with clients on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In the interest of health and safety for employees and our clients the department has developed guidelines on staff use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for face-to-face interactions with clients.

What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that may cause illness in animals or humans. Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads through close contact with an infected person; mostly face-to-face or within a household. Close contact means greater than 15 minutes face-to-face or the sharing of a closed space (such as a car or small room) for more than two hours with a person who has a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Measures to prevent the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

- Practice good personal and cleaning hygiene etiquette and infection prevention
- Postpone any non-urgent face-to-face client contact and home visits
- Consider alternative communications technology for client interactions and child protection activities where possible, including:
 - accessing video links to court hearings/sessions where offered
 - utilising the telephone (incl Facetime) as an alternative to physical visits
 - avoid sharing a phone with client/s when utilising the Phone Interpreter Service. Alternatives include using the speaker function on the phone or setting up a three-way phone conference
 - scanning and emailing documents rather than exchanging hard copies
 - maintain direct client contact via phone calls, text messages, Skype, Facetime or other (where client or family has access), email, letters by post.
- **Where a visit occurs to the home of a client or carer:**
 - maintain a social distance from clients of *at least* 1.5 metres:
 - wherever possible, do not come into physical contact with clients, parents, carers (or others) during the visit.
 - if a child requires a visual examination (to observe signs of injury or harm), encourage the parent or carer to remove the client's clothing sufficiently to conduct this examination. A child protection practitioner should only do so where necessary.
 - assess rooms, children's bedding, toys etc by direct observation wherever possible and avoid touching items within the household.
 - where social distancing can't be maintained, limit the number of staff who have direct contact with a client for example, an infant or child
 - where you would normally do a SIDS safe sleeping demonstration, provide instructions verbally for the parent/carer to carry out, under the child protection practitioner's observation.
- consider alternatives to transporting a child to court for example, getting another person to transport the child or arrange for the child to give instruction to his or her legal representative by phone
- wherever possible limit the time in transporting clients to 2 hours or less at a time, without a break.

- **Where having children in child protection offices is unavoidable** (for example, waiting for a placement to be found):
 - limit the child’s movement around the office and contain the child in one room or location where possible
 - ensure the child’s hands are washed (at a minimum) on arrival, after eating, after toileting and prior to leaving the office. Where possible, use disposable plates, cups and utensils.
- limit direct physical contact where possible, but when direct physical contact has needed to occur observe recommended hygiene practices.
- Remove all toys (e.g. soft toys) and other items which can’t be disinfected from client access rooms

Determining the need for Personal Protective Equipment

Non-urgent client contact and home visits are being postponed, or delivered through alternative means. However, in some cases face-to face interaction with clients may be unavoidable. In these cases it may be necessary to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE helps to protect people from infections like the coronavirus and depending on the situation may include a mask, gloves, goggles and a gown.

To determine whether you need to use PPE for face-to-face contact with a client, complete the [Coronavirus client risk assessment checklist](#) below and follow the appropriate guidance.

If you work in disability accommodation, inclusive of forensic services, you should refer to guidance within the Residential Services Practice Manual. If you work in another accommodation service, for example Secure Welfare Service, you can also utilise the Coronavirus client risk assessment checklist to determine whether you may need to use PPE when interacting with a client. If the answer to any of the questions is yes then you should take steps to isolate the client and provide them with a mask and gloves to wear. In addition, visitors to these facilities should be asked these questions and denied entry.

The guidance has been developed using, ‘*Rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)*’, published by the World Health Organization on 19 March 2020 and will be updated as required.

For guidance on how to safely put on or remove PPE, see [Sequence for putting on PPE](#) and [Removal of PPE](#) below.

Coronavirus client risk assessment checklist

All clients, family members residing in the client’s home and carers must be screened for risk factors and symptoms of coronavirus prior to any face-to-face contact. Staff should ask the questions below when arranging a home visit, office visit or any other face-to-face interaction with a client or a family. This includes any other persons who may be present during the visit.

*Any decisions to have face to face contact with clients across any child protection team or phase should be discussed with and endorsed by your Manager, or in Child Protection a Deputy Area Operations Manager or above.

Before any face-to-face client interaction		
Question	Response	Action
1. Do they have a confirmed case (diagnosis) of coronavirus, or have they had close contact with a confirmed case in the past 14 days.	YES	Do not proceed with the face-to-face meeting. If you must proceed with the face-to-face meeting, utilise the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask

Before any face-to-face client interaction		
Question	Response	Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloves Maintain social distancing of 1.5m and practice good hygiene. If you are attending a client's home conduct the meeting outside if possible. If this is not possible try to avoid touching any surfaces in the home even with gloves on. CP Only: Include an alert in CRIS alert screen. Alert should read Serious Hazard COVID 19 risk
	NO	Proceed to Question 2.
2. Have they returned to Australia from overseas in the past 14 days?	YES	Do not proceed with the face-to-face meeting. If you must proceed with the face-to-face meeting, utilise the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask • Gloves Maintain social distancing of 1.5m and practice good hygiene. If you are attending a client's home conduct the meeting outside if possible. If this is not possible try to avoid touching any surfaces in the home even with gloves on. CP Only: Include an alert in CRIS alert screen. Alert should read Serious Hazard COVID 19 risk.
	NO	Proceed to Question 3.
3. Do they have any symptoms of coronavirus (i.e. fever and cough, sore throat, shortness of breath)?	YES	Do not proceed with the face-to-face meeting. If you must proceed with the face-to-face meeting, utilise the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask • Gloves • Goggles Maintain social distancing of 1.5m and practice good hygiene. If you are attending a client's home conduct the meeting outside if possible. If this is not possible try to avoid touching any surfaces in the home even with gloves on. CP Only: Include an alert in CRIS alert screen. Alert should read Serious Hazard COVID 19 risk.
	NO	If the meeting is required proceed with face-to-face meeting. Maintain social distancing of 1.5m and

Before any face-to-face client interaction		
Question	Response	Action
		<p>practice good personal hygiene.</p> <p>If you are attending a client's home conduct the meeting outside if possible. If this is not possible try to avoid touching any surfaces in the home but if this will not be possible you may consider wearing gloves.</p>
Where you cannot complete questions 1 to 3		
Where you cannot determine whether the client is at risk of having coronavirus because you cannot get in contact with them or they refuse to answer.	YES	<p>Do not proceed with the face-to-face meeting.</p> <p>If you must proceed with the face-to-face meeting, utilise the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask • Gloves
Unannounced visits		
Where a visit is assessed as needing to be unannounced.		<p>Ask questions 1 to 3 above at the commencement of the visit, prior to entering the home. If this is not practical and you must proceed with the face-to-face meeting, utilise the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask • Gloves <p>Maintain social distancing of 1.5m and practice good hygiene. If you are attending a client's home conduct the meeting outside if possible. If this is not possible try to avoid touching any surfaces in the home even with gloves on.</p>
Where you will be in physical contact with a client		
Ask questions 1 to 3 above.	YES	<p>If the answer to any of the three questions is YES and you will be in physical contact with a client (i.e. touching them, physically assisting them, carrying them) you should utilise the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mask • Gloves • Goggles • Gown

Note/ the recommended use of Personal Protective Equipment is in line with the WHO's '*Rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)*', 19 March 2020.

Sequence for Putting on PPE

If possible, put PPE on before contact with a suspected or confirmed case. Please follow the advice below to put on PPE:

Hand hygiene

- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Gown (if using)

- Fully cover torso from neck to knees, arms to end of wrists, and wrap around the back
- Fasten in back of neck and waist

Mask

- Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck.
- Protective eyewear or face shield (if using)
- Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit.

Goggles (if using)

- Place over eyes and adjust to fit

Gloves

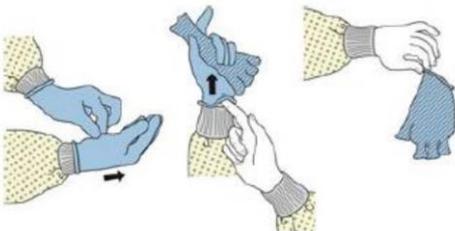
- Extend to cover wrist and if possible, sleeve of uniform (if wearing long sleeves).

Sequence for Removing PPE

Please follow the advice below to remove PPE:

Gloves

- The outside of the gloves may be contaminated.
- Grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand and peel off.
- Hold removed glove in gloved hand.
- Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist.
- Peel glove off over first glove.
- Discard gloves in waste container.



Hand hygiene

- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Goggles (if using)

- The outside of eye protection or face shield may be contaminated.

- To remove, handle by head band or earpieces.

Hand hygiene

- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Gown (if using)

- The front and sleeves of the gown may be contaminated
- Unfasten gown ties, taking care that sleeves don't contact your body when reaching for ties
- Pull gown away from neck and shoulders, touching inside of gown only
- Turn gown inside out
- Fold or roll into a bundle and discard in a waste container

Hand hygiene

- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub.

Mask

- Front of mask may be contaminated – do not touch.
- Grasp bottom, then top ties or elastics and remove.
- Discard in waste container.

Hand hygiene

- Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand rub immediately after removing all PPE.

Disposal of PPE

If PPE is not contaminated it can be disposed of in general waste, if it has been contaminated it should be disposed of in the following manner:

- Remove and place in sealable plastic bag.
- Transport and store in a secure area within a DHHS facility property office.