

COVID Safety and PPE for Health Officers

PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE:

In order to help reduce potential exposure to Covid-19 on the job, all Health Officers are required to take appropriate job safety precautions and use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when needed. The virus spreads primarily via respiratory droplets released when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. The disease is prevented via avoidance of droplets via distancing, PPE, and limiting time spent with others who may be infected.

Please review the following instructions:

Personal Safety & Health:

- When possible, try to avoid contact with a potential contaminants or infectious agents. Plan to complete your job tasks remotely via phone, video, email or observation from a distance.
- If you need to complete an Inspection of schools, daycare or foster homes, then plan to bring and use appropriate PPE, unless you can confirm no risk of contact with other persons.
- Understand how to prevent the spread of Covid-19 via distancing of six feet, or use of barriers (i.e. PPE, face coverings, plastic, Plexiglas, etc.) and/or reduced exposure time.
- Maintain respiratory etiquette to avoid droplet transmission or direct contact with pathogens.
- Maintain hand hygiene practices to avoid indirect contact with pathogens via common surfaces such as door, handles, knobs and buttons on equipment.
- Wash your hands often, especially after contact with multiple people or many common surfaces. Soap and water are the best cleaners, with alcohol hand sanitizer as a backup.
- Be aware of your environment, and avoid close contact with people especially if they appear to be sick with fever, cough, sneezing, or other signs of respiratory disease.

If you cannot avoid close contact with the public (6ft or less) or with a potential contaminant, wear PPE or other droplet barriers, and reduce the time in contact with others to 10 minutes or less. The PPE listed below is the same as required for [law enforcement](#).

The minimum PPE is:

1. A single pair of disposable examination gloves,
2. Any NIOSH-approved particulate respirator (i.e., N-95 or higher-level respirator). Cloth facemasks may an acceptable alternative until the supply chain is restored, and only if others in close contact are also wearing a face covering.
3. Eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that covers the front and sides of the face)
4. Disposable isolation gown or single-use/disposable coveralls..

As a reminder, simple cloth face coverings are worn to protect others in case the wearer is infected with Covid-19 and has not started showing symptoms. In an occupational setting, cloth face masks are not an adequate substitute for a respirator that protects you from being exposed.

In regard to workplace safety, NH municipal employees are covered by the NH Department of Labor, and not Federal OSHA. Under [RSA 281-A: 64](#), municipalities must provide employees with safe employment. Safe employment includes but is not limited to furnishing personal protective equipment,

safety appliances and safeguards; ensuring that such equipment, appliances, and safeguards are used regularly; and adopting work methods and procedures which will protect the life, health, and safety of the employees.

SAFETY & PPE RESOURCES:

For more information on how to protect yourself on the job, please consult the following resources:

New Hampshire Department of Labor Best Practices for Employers and Employees during the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://www.nh.gov/labor/documents/best-practices-during-covid.pdf>

How it Spreads

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html>

Using Personal Protective Equipment:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>

Personal Protect Equipment for Environmental Health Workers:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ppe/environmental.htm>

For questions concerning personal protective equipment contact:

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