

Practices for the Use of Masks, Face Coverings and Gloves for Transportation Workers and Passengers in the Road Transportation System

Important Note

Risk reduction measures in the transportation system, including those involving face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE) and those involving enhanced cleaning measures, should be interpreted in full respect of the **primary responsibility of public health agencies**. As such, provinces/territories maintain full flexibility and autonomy in the management of risk reduction and the use of PPE, as they deem appropriate, to address unique regional characteristics and operational realities.

It is important to note that the measures described in this document constitute **good practices** to support the safe and orderly restart of the transportation system, and help mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These measures are not to be considered obligations, nor standards, and should only be implemented in cooperation with public health authorities.

All those involved in the transportation system are encouraged to continue monitoring and abiding by public health authorities' Coronavirus (COVID-19) recommendations by consulting federal, provincial and territorial government websites (refer to Annex A for a listing of these websites).

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to distinguish the different types of masks, face coverings, and other personal protective equipment (PPE), and establish practices with respect to their use as it pertains to drivers, passengers, support workers and all those involved in the following key areas of the road transportation system, namely:

- Commercial vehicle and motor carrier operations;
- Intercommunity bus operations; and
- Urban transit operations.

To note: Private vehicles, including those for hire, ride-hailing/sharing services, and taxis are not considered in the scope of this document.

Context

In the particular context of COVID-19, masks and face coverings offer varying degrees of protection against infection. The appropriate form of PPE for a given scenario is determined by the operating environment (e.g. occupation, setting). Decisions in this regard must be made carefully, in order to ensure that supplies are not being diverted away from critical areas of need. In addition, eye protection is required in conjunction with masks to fully protect against respiratory droplets.

This document does not include information related to training in the proper use and disposal of equipment; however, prior to using a respirator or mask of any kind, users should be familiar with how to use it (put it on, take it off, discard it), including its limitations and when to change it (e.g., when damp). It is important that users of PPE understand the risks that may be associated with the use of PPE, including increased risk of exposure to the virus by self-contamination (e.g. touching of the face or PPE with hands/gloves while wearing this equipment).

All those involved in the road transportation system should follow advice and recommendations published by public health authorities. Notably, this document is informed by [guidance](#) developed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), and should be interpreted in full respect of provincial/territorial public health guidance¹. It should be applied in recognition of unique regional characteristics across jurisdictions, including regulations and guidance related to health and safety.

Ensuring Measures Taken Reflect Risk of Exposure

Applying a combination of controls from across the hierarchy of controls may mitigate and/or eliminate hazards drivers and passengers may be exposed to. Those involved in the road transportation system are encouraged to continue monitoring and abiding to public health authorities' recommendations published on their websites (Annex A).

Proven interventions to limit the spread of COVID-19 include: hand washing, regular cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, respecting physical distancing by maintaining a two metre distance from other people, and staying home when sick/experiencing symptoms. It is critical that these measures continue.

Masks/Face Coverings

N-95 Masks: In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, respirators (e.g. N-95 masks) must be conserved for health care workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients. It is extremely important to not divert the supply of this PPE away from where it is needed most. As such, the use of respirators, outside of healthcare settings or other industries where respirators are routinely used, is not recommended. N-95 masks should continue to be used outside the COVID-19 context only where this is the usual prescribed PPE for protection against other identified hazards.

Furthermore, an N-95 mask is a respirator which is required to be fitted to each wearer individually to ensure there is proper seal so that no contaminant can leak in from around the face – a process called fit testing.

Medical Masks: Medical masks are effective barriers for retaining respiratory droplets which can be released from the wearer through talking, coughing, or sneezing. Medical masks are typically used by medical professionals to avoid spreading germs to patients (e.g., during surgical or dental procedures). Depending on the type of medical mask, it may provide some level of protection from respiratory droplet transmission for the wearer. Medical masks do not protect against airborne hazards.

Although all efforts should be made to preserve the supply of medical masks for those who most need them, these may be appropriate for some transportation sector workers, depending upon their occupational risk assessments. Medical masks also offer protection to those around the user when social distancing cannot be respected.

Face Covering: Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is another way of covering your mouth and nose to prevent your respiratory droplets from coming into contact with others or contaminating surfaces. A cloth mask or face covering can reduce the chance that others come into contact with respiratory droplets, in the same way that covering a cough with tissues or the sleeve can reduce that chance. Instructions on how to make “sew” and “no-sew” cloth face coverings from t-shirts, bandanas,

¹ This document, intended for all those involved in commercial motor vehicle transportation, is consistent with the federal/provincial/territorial multi-modal approach to risk reduction and personal protective equipment.

or other cotton-like materials are published on federal, provincial and territorial public health authorities' web pages.

In the absence of specific requirements to wear a medical mask or respirator as PPE under occupational health assessments, when the local epidemiology and rate of community transmission warrant it, it is recommended that commercial motor vehicle drivers and others involved in the road transportation system consider wearing a non-medical mask or face covering:

- For periods of time when it is not possible to consistently maintain a two-metre physical distance from others, particularly in crowded public (e.g. public transit);
- When they are required to exit their vehicle and may not be able to physically distance from others (e.g. at rest-stops, gas stations, during deliveries, etc.);
- As directed by law enforcement, public health authorities, Canada Border Service Agents, or other officials when crossing community check points, interprovincial borders, or the Canada-U.S. border (if required/as appropriate).

Eye Protection: Eye protection, such as a face shield or goggles (e.g. CSA approved safety glasses), is used to protect the eyes from potentially infectious respiratory droplets. Eye protection, in combination with a medical mask, may be appropriate for workers that must come within two metres of someone who cannot wear a non-medical mask or face covering (e.g. infant, respiratory condition).

Gloves: Disposable gloves (latex, vinyl, synthetic polymer or nitrile) are recommended when workers will be in direct contact with an ill person, or a contaminated object or environment. Gloves are not routinely recommended for handling documents or providing services if hand washing facilities or alcohol-based hand sanitizer is available.

Within the transportation sector, gloves are recommended for workers having physical contact with passengers or with items that would be contaminated by passengers. Gloves are also recommended for use when cleaning areas that may be contaminated.

Commercial vehicle drivers are encouraged to use disposable gloves when cleaning high-touch surfaces in their vehicles. Caution and proper safety/hand hygiene procedures for putting on and removing the gloves must be followed. Soiled disposable gloves should be discarded in lined garbage receptacles, or stored in sealed disposable plastic bags until they can be properly disposed of if a garbage bin is not available.

Commercial vehicle drivers are also encouraged to wear gloves or otherwise cover their hands when pumping gas, touching the service station door handles, or handling any automotive products that may be required when performing vehicle maintenance, such as filling windshield washer fluid and adding motor oil, if possible. Commercial vehicle drivers should wash their hands or apply hand sanitizer immediately thereafter, if available. Commercial motor vehicle transportation workers may also require gloves for non-COVID applications. All parties involved in the commercial motor vehicle transportation system should follow public health guidance for proper hand washing/sanitizing protocols.

| Type of PPE | Description | Application for COVID-19 |
|---|---|--|
| <p data-bbox="203 233 586 264">N95 Respirator (and equivalent)</p>  | <p data-bbox="646 233 1065 407">Used for working with dust, mold, or medical/ environmental emergencies. Protects against airborne particles, but not gases or vapors.</p> <p data-bbox="646 449 1045 623">Protects wearer from germs by blocking out at least 95% of small airborne particles (if worn, manipulated and disposed of correctly).</p> | <p data-bbox="1092 233 1417 300">Healthcare workers treating COVID-19 patients</p> <p data-bbox="1092 342 1406 516">Transportation workers as recommended by OHS advice to protect from airborne particles (e.g. dust from grain, potash)</p> <p data-bbox="1092 590 1414 726">Self-protection - yes Protect others – yes (except for models with an exhaust valve)</p> |
| <p data-bbox="203 737 375 768">Medical Mask</p>  | <p data-bbox="646 737 1003 873">Used mostly by medical professionals to prevent them from getting germs on their patients.</p> <p data-bbox="646 915 1057 1052">Provides protection against droplets, which are a predominate route of transmission for COVID-19.</p> | <p data-bbox="1092 737 1414 1125">Transportation workers when there is potential for contact with COVID-19 infected individuals, or when in close contact with susceptible individuals (e.g., elderly, those with underlying conditions) and physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.</p> <p data-bbox="1092 1157 1414 1402">Self-protection – variable/ yes if used with eye protection (protection against droplets) Protect others – yes (protection against droplets)</p> |
| <p data-bbox="203 1413 610 1444">Non-Medical Mask/Face Covering</p>  | <p data-bbox="646 1413 1057 1619">Non-medical masks or face coverings can be sewn, cut or fashioned from a bandana, t-shirt, piece of cotton fabric or other breathable material. This category also includes cone dust masks.</p> <p data-bbox="646 1661 1057 1766">Can reduce the chance that others come into contact with respiratory droplets from the wearer.</p> | <p data-bbox="1092 1413 1390 1619">Transportation workers when they are unable to consistently respect physical distancing of 2 metres in performing duties.</p> <p data-bbox="1092 1661 1390 1797">Passengers when unable to consistently respect physical distancing of 2 metres.</p> <p data-bbox="1092 1797 1398 1871">Self-protection - variable Protect others – yes</p> |

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|---|---|---|
| <p>Face shield/Goggles</p>  | <p>Used by medical professionals as protection against droplets when working with patients.</p> <p>Shields fit over the face and are held in place by head straps or caps and cover the entirety of the face.</p> <p>Goggles for splash protection are worn over normal prescription eye glasses and contact lenses.</p> | <p>Healthcare workers treating COVID-19 patients</p> <p>Transportation workers who are unable to maintain 2 metres distance from any other individual who cannot wear a mask or face covering, and as identified in a Threat Hazard Assessment.</p> <p>Self-protection – yes if worn with a mask</p> <p>Protect others - no</p> |
| <p>Disposable Gloves</p>  | <p>Protect the wearer by providing a barrier to help prevent potential exposure to infectious disease.</p> | <p>Healthcare workers treating COVID-19 patients</p> <p>Transportation workers that must come into physical contact with others or with potentially contaminated items</p> <p>Self-protection - yes</p> <p>Protect others – yes, if gloves are changed between use and proper hand hygiene is performed</p> |
| <p>Protective Barrier</p>  | <p>In some scenarios (e.g. select transit bus settings, transportation service counters), protective barriers/driver doors made of transparent materials have been installed, offering protection to the driver and passengers (or worker and customer) in cases where a two metre physical distance is not possible. This may change the requirement for other forms of PPE, based on a health and safety risk assessment.</p> | <p>Self-protection - yes</p> <p>Protect others – yes</p> |

Hand Washing/Hand Sanitizer

Hand washing with plain soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene, since the mechanical action is effective in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Hands should be washed using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. When drying hands, disposable paper towels are preferred.

If soap and water are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) can be used as a temporary measure until hand washing can be done. ABHS containing 60-90% alcohol concentration (optimally over 70%) are the most rapidly active of all agents used in hand disinfection. However, ABHS may not be effective when there is organic material on your hands (e.g. after using the toilet). For this reason, ABHS alone should not be used on visibly soiled hands. Use wipes to remove soil, followed by ABHS.

Other Cleaning Supplies

Commercial vehicle drivers are encouraged to frequently clean high-touch surfaces in the cabs of their vehicles, especially at the start and end of each trip.

For routine cleaning and disinfection, and for areas potentially contaminated with COVID-19, a hard-surface disinfectant authorized by Health Canada is recommended. For a list of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19)², please see Health Canada's website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html#tbl1>.

Commercial vehicle drivers will need cleaning cloths to disinfect high-touch surfaces using damp cleaning methods. Disposable cloths are preferred. After cleaning, soiled cleaning cloths should be disposed of in lined garbage bins, or stored in sealed disposable plastic bags until they can be properly disposed of if a garbage bin is not available. Reusable cleaning cloths may also be used, but should be stored in sealed disposable plastic bags until they can be laundered using regular laundry soap and hot water (60 to 90 degrees Celsius).

In conclusion, it should be remembered that the information relating to PPE and the recommendations for their usage may change. It is therefore important that workers, as well as users of the transportation system, refer to the most recent recommendations of the provincial, territorial and federal governments regarding the use of PPE in different contexts.

² In recognition of the ongoing world-wide shortage of PPE, face coverings, hard-surface disinfectant supplies and other protective supplies and equipment, it may be difficult for those involved in the transportation industry to source these supplies.

ANNEX A: FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL WEBSITES RELATED TO COVID-19

All those involved in the transportation system are encouraged to continue monitoring and abiding by public health authorities' Coronavirus (COVID-19) recommendations by consulting federal, provincial and territorial government websites.

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| Government of Canada | https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html |
| Ontario | https://covid-19.ontario.ca/index.html |
| Quebec | https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/ |
| Newfoundland and Labrador | https://www.gov.nl.ca/covid-19/ |
| Nova Scotia | https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/ |
| New Brunswick | https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/corporate/promo/covid-19.html |
| Prince Edward Island | https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/topic/covid-19 |
| Nunavut | https://www.gov.nu.ca/health/information/covid-19-novel-coronavirus |
| Northwest Territories | https://www.gov.nt.ca/covid-19/ |
| Yukon Territory | https://yukon.ca/covid-19 |
| British Columbia | http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/ |
| Alberta | https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx |
| Saskatchewan | https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus |
| Manitoba | https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/index.html |