

COVID-19 Protective Eyecare Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is only one measure to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. Employees must continue to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres or greater whenever possible, practice proper [hand hygiene](#), [proper donning and doffing of PPE](#), [cleaning shared and reusable equipment](#), ensure [daily active screening for employees](#), and not coming to work when not feeling well, even if symptoms are mild.

When considering PPE:

1. Always perform an assessment prior to any employee or client interaction to determine the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements. In all settings, it is recommended to modify the working environment to enable minimum 2 metre distancing and reduce prolonged close contact between individuals.
2. Protective eyewear (in addition to a mask*) is strongly recommended any time a physical distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained between employees interacting for more than 15 minutes (accumulatively over the course of 24 hours). A mask (medical mask for personal care services) and eye protection must be worn when an employee provides services to clients** not wearing masks/face coverings.
3. PPE and protective eyewear should be put on **before** interaction with employees or clients.

*Review the [Region of Waterloo Public Health COVID-19 Contact Tracing Guidance Document](#) for a full explanation of the PPE required to avoid becoming a high risk close contact of a positive case.

**Under the [Ministry of Ontario COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open](#), under the Re-Opening Ontario Act, eye protection is a requirement in workplaces/businesses (in addition to a mask), during instances where patrons without face coverings are within 2 metres of workers; or while providing personal care services.

When selecting eye protection for the workplace, consider the following criteria:

- Eye protection fits properly and does not interfere with the proper fit of a worker's mask.
- Eye protection must be used in conjunction with a mask/face covering
- Eye protection is either single use disposable or able to be cleaned, disinfected and reused
- Eye protection must provide a barrier to splashes from the side
- The type of work/activity, when selecting eye protection as PPE

Options	Considerations in Selection
Goggles 	Goggles with a snug fit around the eyes provide reliable eye protection from splashes, sprays, and respiratory droplets.
Face Shield 	Face shields cover a maximum area of the face to reduce exposure from splash, spray or droplets to both the eyes and face. The face shield must cover the front and sides of the face to reduce the possibility of splash, spray, or respiratory droplets from going around the edges of the shield.
Safety Glasses 	Safety glasses that provide a barrier to splashes from the side are acceptable eye protection, but do not provide the same level of protection from splashes, sprays, and droplets as goggles or face shields. There will be gaps between the glasses and face. Goggles or face shields are preferred for prolonged close contact , especially if co-workers or clients are unmasked.

If you wear prescription glasses, use a face shield or goggles that fit snugly over the eyeglasses. Conversion kits would not make the eyewear compliant to be used as PPE within a workplace. In addition, cleaning and disinfection products for reusable PPE may damage prescription glasses.

Cleaning Protective Eyewear

1. All eye protection must be **cleaned and disinfected** between uses
 - Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfecting of eye protection, if available.
2. Use [Health Canada approved disinfectant wipes](#).
3. Perform [hand hygiene](#) prior to removing eye protection
4. When removing eye protection, reach up behind head or side of head; do not touch the front of contaminated eye protection
5. Using a [Health Canada approved disinfectant wipe](#) in one hand, carefully **wipe the inside** surface of eye protection. Discard wipe.
6. Still holding eye protection in the same hand, use the other hand and take a second [Health Canada approved disinfectant wipe](#), and **wipe the outside** surface of the eye protection. Discard wipe.
7. Place clean eye protection on clean surface.
8. Perform [hand hygiene](#).
9. If visibility is compromised by residual disinfectant, eye protection can be rinsed with tap water.
10. Allow eye protection to dry prior to next use.
11. Store in a designated clean area in a manner to prevent contamination (e.g. labelled paper or plastic bag.)
12. Discard eye protection if damaged and/or it becomes difficult to see through

Adopted with permission from Ottawa Public Health

Sources:

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5. Public Health Ontario. (2013). *Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in All Health Care Settings*. 3rd edition.