
Overview

Personal protective equipment is an essential health and safety measure to protect health and social care workers and their individuals. In this standard, personal protective equipment refers to gloves, aprons, gowns, coveralls, surgical face masks, respirators, goggles and face shields used to minimise the risks of infection.

The standard applies to all health and social care settings, including community and domiciliary settings, and ambulance care settings. Local policies will specify the personal protective equipment available that healthcare workers should use based on a risk assessment carried out by the employing organisation.

Cleaning and disinfecting are the terms that are used in this standard however in some areas the term 'decontamination' is used. Decontamination is an umbrella term which incorporates cleaning, disinfecting and sterilising as appropriate.

The standard should be used alongside relevant legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

1. access and accurately interpret all relevant work instructions and information
2. work safely at all times and in accordance with all relevant legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols
3. deal promptly and effectively with any problems within your control and report those which cannot be solved
4. identify and minimise hazards and risk in the workplace
5. consider the risks of acquiring and spreading infection before, during and after each activity you undertake, including considering potential contamination of the environment in which you are working
6. use appropriate personal protective equipment for the activity you are undertaking based on the risk assessment and organisational requirements
7. perform effective hand hygiene before putting on, and immediately after removing, personal protective equipment
8. prior to use, check all items of personal protective equipment for cleanliness and damage and ensure they fit correctly
9. perform a fit check each time a respirator is used
10. remove and replace any item of personal protective equipment if it becomes damaged as soon as you can safely do so
11. change items of personal protective equipment in accordance with organisational procedures
12. remove items of personal protective equipment immediately after use, before touching any clean areas, items, or surfaces, or touching individuals
13. dispose of single use items safely, according to organisational requirements
14. clean re-usable items, with or without disinfection, before storage in accordance with organisational requirements
15. dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
16. complete and store all relevant documentation in accordance with organisational requirements

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. the current legislation, guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols which are relevant to your work practice and to which you must adhere
2. the scope and limitations of your own competence, responsibilities and accountability as it applies to your job role
3. how to access and interpret all relevant work instructions and information
4. specific procedures for reporting issues which are beyond your competence, responsibilities and accountability
5. the duty to report any acts or omissions that could be unsafe/detrimental to you or others
6. the hazards and risks which may arise during the execution of your work role and how you can minimise these
7. how to adapt communication styles in ways which are appropriate to the needs of the individual
8. the correct use of any equipment and PPE to protect the health and safety of you and others
9. how to obtain positive confirmation of an individual's identity in accordance with organisational procedures
10. the principles, practice and procedures associated with informed consent
11. relevant standard infection prevention and control precautions, national legislation/guidance and local policies/procedures
12. the chain of infection
13. hierarchy of control
14. the key moments of hand hygiene
15. how approaches in clinical and social environments may differ
16. how to access facilities for hand hygiene
17. effective techniques for maintaining hand hygiene
18. the role of gloves in hand hygiene, when they can be used and their limitations
19. latex allergy and organisational policy on provision of latex-free personal protective equipment including gloves
20. the difference between surgical face masks, respirators, goggles and face shields and when and how to use them
21. the requirements for fit testing of respirators
22. how to safely put on, remove and dispose of personal protective equipment

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23. how and when to report any issues
 24. how to dispose of waste in accordance with organisational procedures
 25. how to complete and store all relevant documentation in accordance with organisational requirements

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Use personal protective equipment to prevent the spread of infection



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