

ST LAWRENCE HEALTH

An Affiliate of
Rochester Regional Health

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Applicability:	St. Lawrence Health system-wide content

Universal Mask Wearing

PURPOSE

To identify the appropriate use of facial personal protective equipment (PPE) in clinical, non-clinical, and office settings at St. Lawrence Health (SLH) during the state of emergency operations associated with, but not limited to, the COVID-19 pandemic.

SCOPE

All SLH affiliate entities, workforce and non-workforce members including, but not limited to, physicians, staff, contractors, and volunteers.

DEFINITIONS

Don: to put on

Doff: to take off

POLICY

All SLH employees working in all areas of SLH including, but not limited to, inpatient units, ambulatory clinic spaces, procedural areas, non-clinical settings and office spaces will be required to wear a medical mask at all times. Hospital-issued medical masks must be worn upon entry to any SLH building.

Correct medical mask placement helps prevent the spread of COVID19 (or other infections as indicated).

- **DO** make sure the medical mask covers your nose and mouth completely.
- **DO** Avoid touching the front of the medical mask when wearing.
- **DO NOT** wear the medical mask on your neck, chin or forehead.
- **DO NOT** wear the medical mask under your nose
- **DO NOT** let children under 2 years old wear medical masks.

PROCEDURE

Providers, Staff, Contractors, Vendors, and Volunteers

Hospital-issued medical masks will be used during working hours. In the event that a medical mask becomes visibly soiled, saturated, contaminated (e.g. after sneezing or coughing) or damaged, a new mask must be obtained. Medical mask stock will be securely stored in each setting. **Providers, Staff, Contractors, Vendors**

and Volunteers will wear a medical mask and may NOT wear homemade masks (e.g. cloth masks), vented masks, neck gaiters and bandana style face coverings in any SLH building.

All employees will wear medical masks unless 6 foot physical distancing can be assured in applicable areas at all times. Please note when leaving work space the medical mask must be donned correctly with hand hygiene performed immediately afterwards. This includes walking in a hallway, using the restroom, or accessing other areas of a shared workspace.

Eye protection (goggles, medical shield, safety glasses) must be worn by all staff members who are directly interacting with a patient without a physical barrier present or prior to entering a patient room or procedure area (e.g., MRI/CT/X-ray) where patient exposure is anticipated. For personnel requiring prescription eyewear, standard eyeglasses are an inadequate barrier; a medical shield or goggles covering the eyewear is required.

Patients

SLH requires patients and visitors to wear a medical mask upon entry to any SLH building. **Cloth Masks are NOT allowed. If the medical mask is deemed compromised, the individual will be given a new medical grade mask. Vented masks, neck gaiters and bandana style medical coverings are not an acceptable substitute and MAY NOT be worn in the healthcare setting.** Patients or visitors who need a medical mask may obtain one upon arrival at various (screening) entrances across SLH.

Patients coming to any SLH facility for an ambulatory appointment who refuse to wear an approved medical mask will only be allowed entrance if they have written documentation of a medical condition from their medical provider that limits their ability to wear a medical mask.

Patients should wear medical masks, as they are able, when others are in the same room or when they exit a room. Admitted patients should be encouraged (but never forced or coerced) to wear a medical mask. A medical shield may be considered as an acceptable alternative in rare cases. Children over the age of two should wear a medical mask, if cooperative and able to do so. Intubated patients and patients under two years of age are excluded from this policy.

Visitors

Visitors refusing to wear an approved medical mask for any reason will not be allowed entrance to any SLH facility.

Conservation of Personal Protective Equipment

The availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) supply is limited. In an effort to maintain an adequate supply for patients and healthcare workers, it is essential that every effort should be made to conserve PPE, which includes approved medical masks. In the event that the supply of medical masks becomes severely limited, distribution of medical masks will be prioritized based on the highest risk clinical activities. Infection Prevention guidelines should be followed on the use and re-use of medical masks. More information can be found on the [COVID-19 Employee Toolkit](#).

Medical Mask Use and Re-use

It is essential that all providers, staff, contractors, vendors, volunteers, visitors, and patients follow the correct procedure for donning and doffing a medical mask.

To Don or Re-Don a Medical Mask:

- A. Perform hand hygiene.
- B. Hold the medical mask by the ear loops and place a loop around each ear.
- C. Mold or pinch the stiff edge to the shape of your nose.
- D. Pull the bottom of the medical mask over your mouth and chin.
- E. Avoid touching the front of the medical mask when wearing.
- F. Perform hand hygiene.

At the end of the workday or shift, personnel are asked to maintain the use of a medical mask until they have exited the SLH building. Non-soiled medical masks may be re-used, upon return to work, if appropriate reuse and storage guidelines are observed.

To Doff a Medical Mask with the Intent to Reuse:

- A. Perform hand hygiene.
- B. Remove medical mask.
- C. If the medical mask is NOT visibly soiled, torn, or saturated, carefully store on a paper towel, exterior side of medical mask down.
- D. Perform hand hygiene.



Related Policies, Documents, & Forms

- [COVID-19 Employee Toolkit](#)
- [COVID-19 Staff Screening, Potential COVID-19 Staff Exposure, and Confirmed Staff Cases](#)
- [COVID-19 Visitor Screening Policy](#)
- [COVID-19 Positive Patients Isolation Precaution Discontinuation Policy](#)
- [COVID-19 Infection Prevention - Standard Precautions - Transmission-based Isolation](#)

References/Citations

- Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. (2020). COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://apic.org/covid19/>
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Attachments

No Attachments

Approval Signatures

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Applicability

Canton-Potsdam Hospital, Gouverneur Hospital, Massena Hospital, St. Lawrence Health System