

COVID-19: Required Use of Personal Protective Equipment for DCF Frontline Team Members

Effective March 28, 2020, frontline team members must utilize Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while conducting investigations, inspections, or site-visits to homes, childcare programs, group homes, foster homes, or other facilities/settings, to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Frontline team members are to don (put on) a surgical mask upon the start of their shift or visit and only change it once it becomes moist, soiled, torn, or difficult to breathe through. It is important to keep hands away from the mask and only touch the straps of the mask. Gloves should be worn when donning and removing masks; it is necessary to perform hand hygiene prior to donning PPE and after removing PPE.

It should be noted that there is a difference between a surgical mask and an N-95 mask. N-95 masks should be prioritized and used in situations where there is a positive case of COVID-19 and the individual is on a respirator or other circumstances where there are concerns for aerosol transmittal.

Regional leadership will disseminate PPE to frontline team members. PPE must be used in the field during investigations, inspections, site-visits and other interactions with the public. PPE use is not required in DCF offices since social distancing, self-isolation, and teleworking measures are in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19. However, if the employee is within close proximity of other team members in the office, a mask should be worn. Team members who are reporting to DCF offices and have compromised immune systems or identify as part of a vulnerable population, should use PPE (gloves, masks).

PPE must be worn in accordance with county emergency orders where applicable. Even with the use of PPE, frontline team members should follow Department of Health (DOH) guidelines and practice social distancing by maintaining at least six feet of distance from anyone you come in contact with. Surgical masks should be utilized per CDC guidelines and provided to those being interviewed when **contact cannot be maintained at 6 feet**. If appropriate, conduct the assessment, investigation, or site-visit in an outdoor setting.

Before entering a home, childcare program, group home, foster home, or other facilities/settings, frontline team members should begin by asking the following screening questions to determine the need of a surgical mask or N-95 mask, as well as additional PPE such as a face shield and/or gown:

- Has anyone experienced a **fever ≥ 100.0 °F** in the past 14 days?
- Has anyone experienced a **new or change in coughing or sore throat** in the past 14 days?
- Has anyone experienced **difficulty breathing** in the past 14 days?
- If YES to any of these questions, did the individual have close contact with a **laboratory confirmed** COVID-19 person?
- Has anyone traveled to or from an affected geographic area with widespread community transmission of COVID-19?
- Has anyone traveled via a cruise ship, airplane, or train in the past 14 days?

If the subject answers “yes” to any of the above questions or there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the home or setting, the frontline team member should determine the potential for aerosol transmission and the need for an N-95 mask.

If the contact required with the child or individual is prolonged and must be within close proximity, such as examining a child for physical abuse indicators or holding a young child in order to evaluate or transport, the frontline team member should assess for the use of a face shield and gown as needed.

The front-line team member should provide a mask to those they are coming in close or prolonged contact with, and when social distancing cannot be maintained, and/or the contact is occurring within a home or building.

If the contact within a home or facility must be prolonged, assess the situation for use of a face shield and/or gown based on the questions above.

Required training on the use of PPE has been uploaded into the DCF Learning Management System (LMS) in People First. This training is intended to inform DCF employees on PPE procedures. The instructional video is comprehensive in nature and in accordance with established CDC guidelines. All of the equipment identified in the video may not be required in the course of day-to-day contact with clients, but is provided as informational reference should you be required to use PPE in the course of your duties. Ensure that you observe social distancing and hygiene guidelines in the daily performance of your duties, as this is the best practice to prevent infection. It should be noted that DCF frontline team members have been directed to use the following PPE: hand sanitization, gloves, surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and N-95 masks (for situations with known COVID-19 exposure). The course information is as follows:

DCF Personal Protective Equipment for COVID-19 Video
COURSE: DCF.OCW.COVID.PPEVideo

Due to the nature of the frontline work, including contact with multiple children and individuals in order to conduct responsibilities, DCF strongly requests employees of DCF and contracted agencies to practice social distancing, regular hand washing, the use of hand sanitizer, and the use of masks while off duty to control the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace and among those we serve.