



Personal Protective Equipment – General Guidelines (managing the risk of COVID-19)

The University of Edinburgh is managing the risk of COVID-19 by ensuring suitable arrangements are in place, including measures to encourage physical distancing, hand/respiratory hygiene, limiting numbers in buildings etc.

The University aims to take all reasonable measures to comply with the physical distancing requirement and therefore it is not expected that general risk assessments will identify a need for additional personal protective equipment.

Staff and students are required to wear and store personal protective equipment as part of their normal activity and role. These requirements are documented in task/department specific risk assessment.

This document sets out general guidance on how we will use, store, launder or dispose of PPE to ensure we do not increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19 due its use.

For information on use of face masks and gloves in general areas please see EBHS-Cov2 “Use of Face Coverings and Gloves for Managing The Risk of COVID-19”.

Laboratory coats/scrubs/protective clothing

- No sharing of lab coats, scrubs or protective clothing unless laundered between use. It is recognised that this may require a temporary change to procedures in some areas.
- Procedures and facilities should be put in place so that PPE is stored so as not to cause contamination to other PPE or personal clothing i.e. no sharing of lockers, no hanging lab coats on hooks immediately adjacent to another,
- Change regularly according to local rules and codes of practice,
- Change immediately if known or suspected contamination,
- Launder according to documented departmental procedures,
- If normal practice is to take home to launder this must be risk assessed to ensure this is done in a safe manner.

Protective glasses/goggles/face visors

- If possible avoid sharing,
- Store so as not to become contaminated e.g. in zip lock bags, plastic containers,
- If require to be shared e.g. visors for LN2 use, clean effectively before and after use.
- Clean using a suitable cleaning fluid that is not corrosive or damaging to the glasses/goggles/visor.

Respiratory Protective Equipment

- Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) is worn as part of normal practice for certain work-based tasks e.g. to reduce the risks of exposure to dust, animal allergens, chemicals etc. Use and type will be determined by risk assessment.
- The University does not expect staff to be required to wear RPE in the normal course of their activity to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- If RPE is identified as being required to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace i.e. due to physical distancing not being possible during certain tasks/areas, it will be supplied by the employer.
- RPE is distinct from face coverings as it is either a tightly fitted respirator (FFP3) or powered hood.
- Hoods and breathing tubes for powered respirators must not be shared, with the exception of RPE provided for emergency situations. These must be disinfected between use.
- Items such as powered belt units may be shared but must be disinfected between users.
- Clean using a suitable cleaning fluid that is not corrosive or damaging to the RPE.
- Store so as not to become contaminated.

Gloves

- The requirement to use gloves will be identified as normal through risk assessment of work tasks. They have not been advocated as a general approach to minimising COVID-19 risk across the Campus.
- Use of shared gloves should be avoided wherever possible.
- If protective gloves are shared items of PPE i.e. gauntlets for protection against temperature extremes, then consideration should be given to wearing a clean pair of disposable gloves underneath. Hands must be washed before and after use of shared items of PPE.

Disposal

- Disposal of used PPE should be via usual departmental waste disposal routes.
- Care must be taken when removing PPE so as not to cause contamination.