

## IPC6.2012 Use personal protective equipment to prevent the spread of infection

### OVERVIEW

Personal protective equipment is an essential health and safety measure to protect health and social care workers and their patients/service users. In this standard, personal protective equipment refers to gloves, aprons, gowns, overalls, 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. Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies. Version No 2

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

You will need to know and understand:

- 1.relevant standard infection prevention and control precautions, national legislation/guidance and local policies/procedures
- 2.health and safety regulations covering your area of work
- 3.regulations and guidelines concerning hazardous substances
- 4.the chain of infection
- 5.how to access facilities for hand hygiene
- 6.effective techniques for maintaining hand hygiene
- 7.the appropriate personal protective equipment to use for the procedure and environment you are working in
- 8.latex allergy and local policy on provision of latex-free personal protective equipment including gloves
- 9.understand the difference between surgical face masks, respirators, goggles and face shields and when and how to use them
- 10.the requirements for fit testing of respirators
- 11.how to safely put on, remove and dispose of personal protective equipment
- 12.your own role and responsibilities, and the responsibilities of others including service users
- 13.how and when to report issues that are within and outside your scope of practice

## PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

You must be able to:

1. 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
2. use appropriate personal protective equipment for the activity you are undertaking based on the local risk assessment and local policy/procedures
3. perform effective hand hygiene before putting on, and immediately after removing, personal protective equipment
4. prior to use, check all items of personal protective equipment for cleanliness and damage and ensure they fit correctly
5. perform a fit check each time a respirator is used
6. use all items of personal protective equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions, and any relevant local and national policies/procedures
7. remove and replace any item of personal protective equipment if it becomes torn, punctured or otherwise damaged, as soon as you can safely do so
8. change items of personal protective equipment between patients/clients/service users and, where appropriate, between different activities with the same patient/client/service user
9. remove items of personal protective equipment immediately after use, before touching any clean areas, items, or surfaces, or touching people, and:
  1. dispose of single use items safely, according to local/national policy/procedures
  2. follow local/national policy/procedures for cleaning, with or without disinfection, of re-usable items before storage
10. should you encounter problems with the facilities and supplies for personal protective equipment, that you are unable to remedy, inform the person responsible for them and ask them to take action

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are additional NOS on the Skills for Health website relating to Decontamination. This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004): Dimension: Core 3 Health, safety and security