



Nova Scotia Health Volunteer Respiratory Virus Safety Guide

Versions: October 4, 2023*
 January 8, 2024
 February 26, 2024
 February 29, 2024
 May 22, 2024
 October 3, 2024

* This document replaces our previous
Nova Scotia Health Volunteer COVID-19 Guide



Nova Scotia Health, Volunteer Respiratory Virus Safety Guide

To all volunteers, welcome to your new volunteer role! We are excited to have you on our team!

This document outlines general information regarding infection control for our Nova Scotia Health Volunteers.

As volunteers, you are important members of our healthcare team, and it is important that we ensure your safety as well as the safety of our patients, residents, visitors and staff at all of our facilities.

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Volunteer Vaccination Policy

As of February 26, 2024 the Volunteer Vaccination policy is no longer in effect.

Self-Screening for Volunteers

All volunteers must self-screen for respiratory virus symptoms prior to attending their shift. Here are the self-screening questions:

SCREENING QUESTIONS:

In the past 48 hours, have you had:

- New Cough or Chronic Cough that is worsening OR
- New unexplained Fever (example: Chills or sweats) OR
- New or worsening Shortness of Breath
- New Sore throat
- New Runny Nose/nasal congestion/sneezing
- New Headache
- New Extreme fatigue/tired all the time
- New Gastrointestinal Symptoms (such as nausea, vomiting or diarrhea)

Attendance Guidance:

If you are unwell, **please do not report for your volunteer shift** and contact your local Consultant/Coordinator for further instructions.

COVID-Positive Volunteers:

- Volunteers who have tested positive for COVID must remain off work for **5 days following symptom onset or date of test**. Upon return to volunteer work, they must mask up to and including day 10.

COVID-Negative Volunteers:

- Volunteers who have tested negative or have no test result available must remain off work until symptoms improve or resolve and are fever-free for 24 hours. Upon return to volunteer work, they must mask up to 10 days from symptom onset.

Site Screening

In keeping with changes to the [Nova Scotia Health Respiratory Virus Safety Plan](#), changes have been made to facility entry protocols. Since Sept. 10, 2023 site screeners are no longer stationed at entrances to Nova Scotia Health facilities, units or departments. Facility entry protocols are communicated through signs and self-serve dispensing units for masks and hand sanitation will be placed at front entrances.

There are four signs to reflect these changes see below.



Arriving for your shift

Upon arrival at any of our facilities please do the following steps.

STEP 1:

Clean your hands upon entering the facility (**see: Appendix A & B, page 10 & 11**) – an alcohol-based hand-rub will be available to you as soon as you enter the building. Please sanitize your hands. This is mandatory.

STEP 2:

If you need to put on a medical mask for your volunteer role (**see: Appendix C, page 12**), always clean your hands before and after putting on your mask.

STEP 3:

Enter your designated volunteer area/room and sanitize your hands after touching any door handles. Hang up your jackets/coats, sign in and then clean your hands again (supplies will be provided). If you are going directly to an inpatient unit or department you will receive specific directions on Infection Prevention and Control protocols either from your immediate supervisor or your Volunteer Resources Consultant/Coordinator. You will be notified where to find any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and how to properly discard any used PPE. For instructions on how to put on and remove your PPE please see **Appendices D & E, page 13 &14**.

****** If you run out of supplies, please ensure the appropriate facility/site contact is informed. You will be notified by your Volunteer Consultant/Coordinator or Program Manager as to whom you should report this information.**

Tips for Staying Safe

BEFORE VOLUNTEERING

- Self-Screen and do not come to facility if you are feeling unwell, even with mild symptoms
- Ensure fingernails are kept clean, short, and do not extend beyond the fingertips
- Wear a clean volunteer uniform/vest (if required) and launder after each shift
- Leave rings and jewelry at home
- Tie back long hair

DURING VOLUNTEERING

- Practice proper hand hygiene when entering the facility as well as before and after every patient/client interaction
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Try to avoid frequently touched surfaces and shared items (e.g. pens, phones)
- Wear your volunteer uniform/vest (if required) and Nova Scotia Health ID Badge
- Wear your medical mask and eye protection, if required for your volunteer role.
- A medical mask is required during all patient interactions in patient rooms.
- During your shift, if you feel unwell separate from others and contact your local Volunteer Consultant/Coordinator for further instructions.

AFTER VOLUNTEERING

- Wash uniform/vest and clothing after each shift
- Disinfect phone if used during your shift
- Stay active and maintain a healthy lifestyle
- It is critical that anyone with any symptoms or feeling unwell stay home to avoid spreading illness to others. If you develop symptoms following your shift, please contact your local Volunteer Consultant/Coordinator for further instructions.

Privacy & Confidentiality

DEFINITIONS

Personal Health Information (PHI)

Any information that identifies an individual (living or deceased).

Privacy

The right of an individual to control access their own Personal Health Information (PHI).
Privacy is Everyone's Responsibility.

Confidentiality

Our duty and responsibility to protect the secrecy of all information entrusted to us by not sharing it with anyone, including staff or other volunteers, without the patient's permission.

Need to Know Principle

All information accessed by employees, volunteers and learners is on a **"need to know"** basis only. PHI may only be shared by you with another health care worker or volunteer - if they require that information to fulfill their role.

Privacy is the foundation of the trust relationship between the patient and the health care worker. It encourages patients to be honest with their health care provider. Without trust that their privacy is protected, patients may hold back information, impacting care.

How to Protect Personal Health Information

- Never ask patients why they are in the hospital.
- Any information related to a patient's/staff's/volunteer's health, is to be held with the utmost confidence and not to be shared with anyone (not even other volunteers or staff).
- Avoid discussing a patient with anyone in hallways, patient rooms, elevators, cafeterias, etc. When you are discussing a patient with someone involved in their care, keep in mind where you are and who might overhear.
- Never discuss the patient's case with anyone without the patient's permission (including family and friends).
- The very fact that a person is receiving health care is confidential.
- Do not take photographs or videos.
- Any information received as part of your volunteer position is not to be posted on social media.
- No photos of patients/staff/volunteers should be shared or posted on social media.
- Volunteers are not permitted to "friend" a patient on social media as it misrepresents the professional relationship.
- Patient confidentiality continues after the end of your volunteer affiliation with Nova Scotia Health.

Please ensure you have sign and return the following documents sent to you from Volunteer Service Staff:

1. Nova Scotia Health Pledge of Confidentiality
2. Volunteer Agreement

Nova Scotia Health Code of Conduct

Nova Scotia Health (NSH) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and respectful environment for all team members (employees, physicians, learners and volunteers), patients, families, and visitors that reflects our Vision, Mission and Values.

Respectful Conduct

Nova Scotia Health Code of Conduct poster (see: Appendix F, page 15)

All Nova Scotia Health team members, patients, families and visitors are required to:

- Treat each other with dignity, fairness, and respect
- Respect diversity, which includes both visible and invisible characteristics and includes differences such as, but not limited to, age, life stage, ability, culture, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, geographical location, language, physical characteristics, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, spirituality, and values
- Communicate in a respectful manner
- Interact without any abuse, harassment, discrimination, aggression
- Report any inappropriate or unprofessional behavior or conduct

If you experience any inappropriate or unprofessional behavior, please contact Security or your Volunteer Consultant/Coordinator

Appendices

Appendix A

Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

How to Wash Your Hands



- 

1 Wet your hands with warm running water.
- 

2 Add soap and scrub for 15-20 seconds.
- 

3 Remember to get every part of both hands.
- 

4 Rinse the soap off under running warm water.
- 

5 Dry your hands with a clean towel.
- 

6 Use the towel to turn off the tap.

 **When soap and water are not available, please use alcohol-based hand sanitizer and rub all parts of your hands for at least 15 seconds.**

Updated May 28, 2020

 nova scotia health authority

For information visit: novascotia.ca/coronavirus

Appendix B

Good Hygiene Stops the Spread of Germs

How to Clean Your Hands with Sanitizer



1

Apply 1 to 2 pumps of alcohol-based hand sanitizer to palm of dry hands.



2

Rub palms of hands together.



3

Rub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.



4

Rub in between and around fingers.



5

Rub the back of each hand with the palm of the other hand.



6

Rub each thumb with the other hand.



7

Rub hands until they are dry.



Do not use towel or paper towel.



If your hands look dirty, please use soap and water to wash them for at least 20 seconds.



Updated September 29, 2020



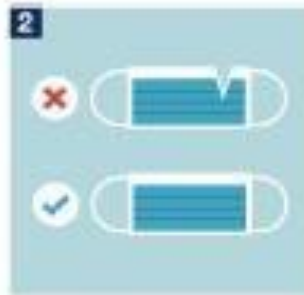
For information visit novascotia.ca/coronavirus

Appendix C

HOW TO WEAR A PROCEDURE MASK



1 Wash your hands with soap and water for 20-30 seconds or perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before touching the face mask.



2 Check the new mask to make sure it's not damaged.



3 Ensure colour side of the mask faces outward.



4 Locate the metallic strip. Place it over and mold it to the nose bridge.



5 Place an ear loop around each ear or tie the top and bottom straps.



6 Cover mouth and nose fully, making sure there are no gaps. Pull the bottom of the mask to fully open and fit under your chin.



7 Press the metallic strip again to fit the shape of the nose. Perform hand hygiene.



8 Do not touch the mask while using it. If you do, perform hand hygiene.



9 Replace the mask if it gets wet or dirty and wash your hands again after putting it on. Do not reuse the mask.

Removing the Mask



1 Perform hand hygiene.



2 Do not touch the front of your mask. Lean forward, gently remove the mask from behind by holding both ear loops or ties.



3 Discard the mask in a waste container.



4 Perform hand hygiene.

These materials were adapted with permission from the BCCDC and the British Columbia Ministry of Health.

GUIDE TO PUTTING ON PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT


Droplet & Contact Precautions (Universal Masking)

1 Procedure/surgical mask


Process will depend on what face/eye protection is available

Scenario 1- If goggles or full-face shield is available, leave mask on and proceed to Step 2.

Scenario 2- If mask needs to be replaced with a mask with visor or N95, perform hand hygiene, remove original mask, and store as per guidance. Proceed to Step 2.



4 N95 Respirator (if applicable)



- Required for AGMPs for patients with unknown, novel or emerging pathogens.
- Refer to manufacturer for specific donning instructions.
- Perform a 'seal check' with each use.
- N95 respirators must be 'fit tested' prior to use.

2 Hand Hygiene



Perform hand hygiene.

Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred. Use soap and water if hand are visibly soiled.

5 Face/Eye Protection



- Put on mask with visor or goggles or full shield as available.
- Place over the eyes or face.
- Adjust to fit
- NOTE: Eyeglasses are not considered protective eyewear.

3 Long-sleeved gown



- Select level of gown based on fluid exposure risk.
- Make sure the gown covers from neck to knees to wrist.
- Tie at back of neck and waist.

6 Gloves




- Put on gloves.
- Pull the cuffs of gloves over the cuffs of the gown.

FOR NOVEL AND EMERGING PATHOGENS: Initiate Contact & Droplet Precautions and wear gloves, gowns, procedure/surgical mask and face/eye protection when within 2 metres of patient.

GUIDE TO REMOVING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Droplet & Contact Precautions (Universal Masking)

1
Gloves




- Outside of glove is contaminated.
- Use glove to glove, skin-to-skin technique.
- Discard in garbage

4
Hand Hygiene

Perform hand hygiene.
Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred. Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled.

2
Hand Hygiene




Perform hand hygiene.
Alcohol-based hand rub is preferred. Use soap and water if hand are visibly soiled.

5
Face/Eye Protection




- Handle only by headband or earpieces.
- Carefully pull away from the face.
- Place non-disposable face/eye protection in designated area for disinfection & disposable items in garbage.

3
Long-sleeved gown



- Carefully unfasten ties. **DO NOT** rip off.
- Grasp the outside of the gown at the back by the shoulders and pull down over the arms.
- Turn the gown inside out during removal.
- Carefully fold into bundle.
- Place disposable gown in garbage or place non-disposable gown in laundry hamper.

6
Mask OR N95 Respirator



Scenario 1- LEAVE MASK ON if wearing full face shield and mask is not visibly soiled or mask integrity is affected by moisture/ humidity. Proceed to Step 7.

Scenario 2: If you wore goggles or wearing mask with visor, mask must be removed. Do not touch front of mask, allow to fall away from face & discard.

N95 must be removed outside of room.

7
Perform Hand Hygiene

8
Exit Patient Room.
Remove N95 (if applicable).
Perform Hand Hygiene

9
If Applicable, Obtain New Mask or Apply Stored Mask



NSHA Code of Conduct

Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and respectful environment for NSHA team members (employees, physicians, learners and volunteers), patients, families, and visitors that reflects our **Vision, Mission and Values**.

Respectful Conduct

All NSHA team members, patients, families and visitors are required to:

- Treat each other with dignity, fairness, and respect
- Respect diversity, which includes both visible and invisible characteristics and includes differences such as, but not limited to, age, life stage, ability, culture, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, geographical location, language, physical characteristics, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, spirituality, and values
- Communicate in a respectful manner
- Interact without any abuse, harassment, discrimination, aggression or violence
- Report any inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour or conduct



Our Values:

- Respect • Integrity
- Courage • Innovation • Accountability