

Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Safety in Adult Family Homes

PURPOSE:

This document has information and resources to help you:

- Purchase and store the right amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) for your Adult Family Home (AFH)
- Recognize and prevent PPE fatigue and complacency
- Learn about ICARs and their benefits for your AFH
- Learn about respiratory protection programs (RPP)

WHAT'S PPE?

PPE is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards and infectious pathogens that can cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. PPE consists of gloves, gowns, facemasks, N95 respirators and eye protection.

AFH OWNER

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Make sure all staff have the right PPE for their job
- Provide training so all staff members can learn how to use PPE correctly
- Maintain enough PPE in the AFH for residents, staff, and visitors

ORDERING PPE

AFHs should keep an adequate PPE supply in each home for residents, staff, and visitor use, and should pursue options to obtain PPE through their normal supply channels. *Current guidance: As of September 8, 2023, current guidance asks AFHs experiencing an outbreak to reach out to their local health jurisdiction. Before receiving PPE resources, AFHs may be asked to attest that all other resources have been exhausted. PPE is not guaranteed, and requests are filled based on availability. The QR code below will link to the most recent guidance.*

PPE PRIORITIZATION PROTOCOL

Conventional strategies - strategies that should already be in place as part of your general infection prevention and control plan: AFHs should maintain a 30-day supply of PPE for current operations and have enough on hand for a possible surge event. AFHs can use the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Burn Rate Calculator to calculate their average PPE consumption or “burn rate.”

Contingency strategies – strategies that can be used during periods of anticipated PPE shortages: AFHs that anticipate a PPE shortage and/or only have 7 to 14 days of PPE supplies on hand should obtain additional PPE through their normal supply channels.

Crisis strategies – strategies that can be used when supplies cannot meet the AFHs current or anticipated PPE utilization rate: When demand is exceeding supply, AFHs should use their operations cache. If they have less than 7 to 14 days of PPE on hand and/or face a surge in COVID-19 cases AFHs may request an emergency shipment of up to 7 days' worth of PPE while restocking their operational cache.

PPE FATIGUE AND COMPLACENCY

The use of PPE for extended periods has been shown to cause physical and psychological challenges to healthcare personnel. The inability to remove PPE during a shift can cause sweating and heat stress, prevent health care workers from hydrating properly, and lead to dehydration and exhaustion during work hours. Improper [donning \(putting on\) and doffing \(taking off\)](#) of PPE can cause increased infection rates, and ill-fitting PPE can lead to poor compliance. AFHs should address job-related PPE concerns using the following steps to help alleviate anxiety related to wearing PPE for long periods.

- Make sure staff have enough break time to get food, water, fresh air, and rest
- Make sure there is enough PPE in stock and that staff can easily access these supplies
- Encourage staff to share any physical or mental health issues affecting them
- Develop and use a fatigue management plan
- Provide ongoing PPE training
- Make sure staff know how to wear PPE correctly with donning and doffing checks
- Observe staff compliance with policy, give immediate feedback and document results

INFECTION CONTROL ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE (ICAR)

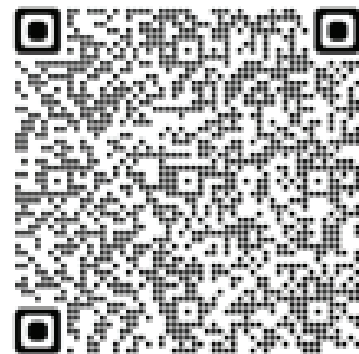
In partnership with local health jurisdictions, the Washington State Department of Health offers free/non-regulatory [Infection Control Assessment and Response \(ICAR\)](#) consultations to AFHs. Experienced Infection Preventionists (IPs) work closely with the facility and customize the consultation to assess infection prevention strengths, discuss areas of concern, and provide information and guidance on a variety of infection prevention and control topics. Each interaction focuses on education and offers the most recent infection prevention resources.

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAMS

AFHs must have a written [respiratory protection program](#) and keep records of employee fit testing, medical clearance, and training. AFHs are required to fit test and provide staff training annually for N95 respirator use. Staff must complete a medical evaluation as required to wear an N95 respirator.

NOTE: Online medical evaluations through 3M end December 31, 2023. DOH anticipates that support for respiratory protection and fit test training for AFHs will end June 30, 2024.

Scan this QR code for the most recent information on requirements and for additional resources on each topic



For questions about on-site COVID-19 testing or to order COVID-19 POC tests kits, please email COVIDTestingSupport@doh.wa.gov.