



# Optimizing Use of Personal Protective Equipment in Rhode Island

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The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) are providing personal protective equipment (PPE) to numerous healthcare, public safety, and support organizations across the State.

We are utilizing all possible mechanisms to rapidly increase supplies through all potential dissemination channels. These efforts include advocating for more supplies from the federal partners, sourcing new suppliers, and collaborating with local organizations to acquire inventory. The use of [crisis capacity strategies](#) for extreme PPE conservation is necessary while the supply chain is unable to meet demand. These crisis strategies include the re-use of N95 respirators and facemasks until they are soiled or broken and storing a used N95 or facemask in a paper bag for use the following day. All organizations should review and revise current work-flow processes to meet optimal operational needs while simultaneously maximizing PPE conservation.

All partners utilizing PPE must conserve and allocate its use according to these US prioritization and guidelines: *Please note that in the chart below, standard medical gloves are disposable and include examination gloves, surgical gloves, and medical gloves for handling chemotherapy agents (chemotherapy gloves). Non-medical gloves may be used when not performing patient care, as they also provide barrier protection. Standard medical masks may be labeled as surgical, isolation, dental, or medical procedure masks (these are often referred to as facemasks). At this time, RIDOH continues to recommend N95 respirators where available and appropriate; RIDOH is exploring the appropriate uses of KN95s.*

Situation	PPE Required in Conservation Environment
<b>During aerosol-generating procedures on COVID-19 patients at medical facilities</b>	Specialized N95/ FFP2 respirator or higher; medical gowns, goggles or disposable face shields, medical gloves, and aprons
<b>Areas of medical facilities providing general care to COVID-19 patients (confirmed or presumptive)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For healthcare workers:</b> N95 respirator or surgical or procedure mask, standard medical gowns, goggles or disposable face shields, and medical gloves.</li> <li>• <b>Cleaners:</b> Heavy-duty gloves or standard gloves, standard medical masks, and gowns.</li> <li>• <b>Necessary visitors:</b> Standard medical masks, gowns, and gloves.</li> <li>• <b>Personnel/patients/visitors in other areas of the facility:</b> Cloth face coverings.</li> </ul>
<b>Testing labs manipulating COVID-19 samples</b>	Standard medical masks, standard medical gowns, full eye shields, and standard medical gloves
<b>Ambulances and other vehicles with patient transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>For medical first responders in direct contact with suspected, presumptive, confirmed COVID-19 patients with respiratory symptoms:</b> N95 respirators, standard medical gowns, goggles or disposable face shields, and medical gloves.</li> <li>• <b>For others in direct contact with suspected, presumptive, confirmed COVID-19 patients without respiratory symptoms:</b> N95 respirator (preferred) or use of a standard medical mask if N95 not available, and other standard precautions. Other PPE may be used where available.</li> <li>• <b>For drivers or co-passengers in non-patient compartments or other indirect contact:</b> N95 respirator (preferred) or use of a standard medical mask if N95 not available.</li> </ul>
<b>Fire, EMS, and Police (not in situation above)</b>	Cloth face covering required for in-station and out-of-station non-emergency activities. Full, medical-grade PPE required when in direct contact (e.g., transporting, administering patient care) with suspected, presumptive, confirmed COVID-19 patients (N95 respirator preferred, or use of a standard medical mask if N95 not available, and other standard precautions).
<b>Other</b>	For cleaners or caregivers in homes, co-living spaces, community buildings, educational centers, correctional facilities <b>with suspected COVID-19 patients</b> —standard medical masks and standard gloves.

## **How to Submit PPE Order Requests**

To ensure efficient processing, it is recommended that organizations identify a single point person to submit PPE requests. State agencies and municipalities must submit requests through [Rhode Island WebEOC](#), if they have requests beyond what is allocated to them. Healthcare organizations may visit [RIDOH's PPE Request webpage](#) to order up to a maximum allocation every two weeks, unless they are responding to an outbreak in their facility. RIDOH is currently accepting PPE orders from the following provider types only:

- Hospitals
- Emergency Medical Services
- Nursing homes
- Assisted living communities
- Home health and hospice agencies
- Health centers
- Urgent care centers
- Healthcare practices/urgent care centers that are voluntary respiratory care clinics

**Resources:** [CDC Infection Control Guidelines](#), [CDC N95 Re-Use Guidelines](#), and [CDC Guidance for Law Enforcement](#)