



ICEG guidelines on cleaning and disinfection of protective eyewear in health and residential care facilities

For advice on infection prevention and control during the COVID-19 pandemic, see the [Department of Health website](#).

As situations change, advice about using personal protective equipment (PPE) by health and care workers¹ in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic is continually reviewed. Check with your state or territory health department for specific advice for your jurisdiction.

Cleaning and disinfection of protective eyewear

NOTE: Do not re-use single-use items; discard after use. For reusable items, follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions.

If there is a supply shortage, an infection control consultant may identify some items as reusable for a specific period of time. This advice is subject to change.

Below are two options for cleaning and disinfection of reusable protective eyewear. Option 1 has each health and care worker cleaning and caring for their own item. This carries a risk of inconsistencies in the quality of cleaning and disinfection. Option 2 is more useful in the context of limited supplies.

OPTION 1: Cleaning and disinfection of protective eyewear by individual health and care workers

1. Carefully wipe the inside then the outside using a clean cloth saturated with neutral detergent solution or a wipe.
2. Carefully wipe the outside using a clean cloth saturated with a TGA-registered hospital disinfectant solution with virucidal claims, or TGA-registered disinfectant wipe.
3. Wipe the outside with clean water to remove residue. Wiping protective eyewear with alcohol can also improve visibility.
4. Dry thoroughly by either:
 - air drying on individual hooks allocated to individual health and care workers which do not allow eyewear to touch one another; or
 - using clean absorbent towels.
5. Place protective eyewear in a 'breathable' storage receptacle.
6. Perform hand hygiene.

OPTION 2 – Mass disinfection of items of protective eyewear

1. After removal, the wearer cleans their own eyewear.
2. Place used eyewear into a bag or container for transfer to a high-volume disinfection area.
3. Perform hand hygiene.

¹ Includes health care workers, personal care workers and support staff who have direct contact with patients or residents in health and residential care facilities, where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is judged to be significant.

Mass cleaning and disinfection

4. Wear PPE when cleaning the eyewear.
5. Place all eyewear in a container with a neutral detergent.
6. Carefully wipe the outside of each item using a wipe or clean cloth saturated with TGA-registered hospital disinfectant solution with virucidal claims, or TGA-registered disinfectant wipe.
7. Wipe the outside of each item with clean water to remove residue.
8. Dry each item carefully, avoiding contamination from the previous step, e.g. by a different person wearing gloves (perform hand hygiene before putting on and after removal).
9. Store items in a dry area to be redistributed

Advantages and limits of face shields

Face shields have some advantages over goggles or safety glasses. However, they do not replace masks in health or residential care facilities where there is a risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Advantages:

- Patients/residents can see the wearer's eyes which may be important for providing care.
- Can be worn over prescription glasses (which do not provide adequate eye protection alone).
- Provide additional droplet protection to the front of the face compared with safety glasses or goggles.
- Certain types of face shields (and other protective eyewear) may be cleaned, disinfected, and reused (depending on manufacturer's instructions).

Limitations:

- There are gaps to the sides and to the bottom of a faceshield. These may allow virus-laden droplets to reach mucous membranes if a mask is not worn at the same time.

Additional considerations

- Wear protective eyewear in combination with a surgical mask.
- Discard protective eyewear when it is difficult to see through or damaged.
- Provide staff with education on how to put on, take off and clean the eyewear.
- Monitor cleaning compliance.
- Wear protective eyewear all the time while caring for patients/residents.
- For the best protection, face shields should extend below the chin at the front and to the ears at the sides. There should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece.
- Some face shield designs (e.g. those that include foam) may be difficult to clean properly. This should be considered during purchase. Do not share face shields with a foam band (use for Option 1, above).