

Toronto Drop-in Network: Guidance on Reusing PPE

Can you reuse some PPE? What should be properly disinfected, and what should be thrown away?
Check out our handy guide below!

Masks

- If the mask becomes visibly soiled, torn, or saturated, **DO NOT REUSE**: discard the mask and obtain a new one.
 - Ideally, masks should be discarded once removed and not be re-used. However, where supplies are limited, masks may be re-used as long as they are not visibly soiled, wet, or otherwise damaged.
- If you are removing the mask with intent to re-use (ex. when eating/drinking), if it is **NOT** visibly soiled, torn, or saturated:
 - Carefully fold so that the outer surface is held inward and against itself (fold lengthwise like a hot dog). The folded face covering can be stored between uses in a clean, sealable paper bag or breathable container labelled with your name.
- If a mask is to be re-used, keep it from being contaminated by storing it in a clean paper bag, or in a cleanable container with a lid with the staff's name to prevent cross-contamination.
 - Paper bags are to be discarded after each use.
 - Reusable containers are to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
 - Bags and containers should be labelled with the individual's name to prevent accidental misuse.

Eye Protection

- If eye protection appears damaged, compromised, or if the straps/foam which are part of the face shield are dirty: **DO NOT REUSE, DISCARD**.
- Do not reuse single-use equipment as it should be discarded.
- Protective eyewear should be stored in a designated clean area.
- Most face shields and goggles can be cleaned and disinfected between use and then put back on.
Check manufacturer's instructions for information on cleaning reusable eye protection. If no instructions are available, use the following steps:
 1. Put gloves on prior to cleaning eye protection.
 2. Clean and disinfect: Using a disinfectant wipe, clean the inside followed by the outside. Allow to dry.
See: <https://tinyurl.com/CleanandDisinfect>
 3. Remove gloves and clean hands.
 4. *Note*: The straps or foam that are part of the face shield do not need to be cleaned. If they are dirty, throw out the face shield and get a new one.

Gloves

- Gloves should never be re-used. They should only be used once, then put into the garbage.
- Always clean your hands after taking gloves off.

Gowns

- Gowns are either disposable or reusable.
- Do not share gowns.
- Only use gowns once.
- Put disposable gowns into garbage after removal and clean your hands.
- Put reusable gowns immediately in laundry hamper or store in a way that will not contaminate others prior to washing.
 - Wash reusable gowns with laundry soap in the washing machine using the hottest temperature setting available on the machine and dry well.
 - Wash gowns separately from other laundry.
 - Wear a gown and gloves when laundering gowns.

Important

PPE should always be changed when it becomes damp, dirty or torn.

Always follow proper PPE sequence and hand hygiene steps when removing PPE to avoid contaminating oneself, shown here: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/ppe-recommended-steps>

Sources:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/cong/2020/06/covid-19-ppe-non-medical-masks-congregate-living-settings.pdf?a=en>
<https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/8fa9-ssha-covid-19-ppe-staff-info-sheet.pdf>