



## **Health and Safety Guidance for New Jersey Child Protection and Permanency (CP&P) and Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit (IAIU) Staff during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

**July 6, 2020**

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families is continuing to monitor the spread of COVID-19 and its impact on children, families, our staff and partner providers throughout the state. The federal [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and [New Jersey Department of Health \(NJ DOH\)](#) are providing ongoing guidance and direction regarding necessary precautions to prevent transmission of the virus.

This document includes guidance to help ensure the health and safety of DCF staff while conducting fieldwork. It includes procedures for conducting fieldwork safely, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), cleaning and disinfecting, management of PPE and cleaning supplies, and COVID-19 testing. It incorporates best practices from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [New Jersey Department of Health](#), [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) and other state agencies across the United States.

### **I. HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR SPECIFIC CASEWORK CIRCUMSTANCES**

#### **Before Every Face to Face Contact**

- Staff should be mindful to use appropriate health and safety procedures any time they will encounter other staff, providers and clients while on the job.
- Consult the [Essential Protective Gear Checklist](#) (Appendix A) to ensure you have the necessary protective gear based on the nature and location of the planned contact.
- Wash your hands, if possible, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol) before and after encountering others.
- void touching your eyes, nose, or mouth at all times.
- Only bring necessary items with you. When visiting clients' homes, or professional offices, Court, etc., Leave bags, purses, and back-packs behind.

#### **Visits to a Home**

- Wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (see: [Determining Appropriate PPE](#) and [Essential Protective Gear Checklist](#)) based on the nature of the planned contact.

- Ask the following COVID-19 screening questions prior to entering the home, from a distance of at least 6 feet:
  - Has anyone in your home tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
  - In the past 14 days, have you, your children, and/or anyone else in your household had any of the following symptoms?
    - Fever of 100.4 or higher
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Chills
    - Repeated shaking with chills
    - Muscle pain
    - Headache
    - Sore throat
    - New loss of taste or smell
  - Have you, your children, and/or anyone in your household had close contact<sup>1</sup> with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
  - Have you, your children, and/or anyone in your household traveled out of state in the last 14 days? The State has issued a **Travel Advisory** under which individuals traveling to or returning to New Jersey from states with increasing rates of COVID-19 are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days. This includes travel by train, bus, car, plane and any other method of transportation. Please note that the [list of designated states](#) will be updated and should be checked regularly.
- If the answer to all of the screening questions is “no”, prepare to enter the home. If the answer to any screening question is “yes”, and close contact is expected, put on the appropriate PPE (see: [Determining Appropriate PPE](#)) prior to entering the home.
- Ask household members to wear a face covering. If a household member does not have a face covering available, supply the household member with a cloth face covering or face mask.<sup>2</sup> If any household member refuses to wear a face mask, then then staff will put on the appropriate PPE as if that person is an individual known or suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2.
- Allow the family to open/close the door or use a barrier (like a tissue) when touching the doorknob.
- Avoid physical contact with household members (e.g., handshakes). If physical contact does occur, use hand sanitizer after contact.
- When possible, maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from other people.

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<sup>1</sup> Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for a period of 10 minutes or more.

<sup>2</sup> Children under two or anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove a face covering without assistance should not wear a mask or face covering.

- If an outdoor space is available and appropriate for the contact, meet there for all or part of the visit. If an outdoor space is not available or appropriate, conduct discussions or interviews in a well-ventilated area.
- Avoid touching or placing belongings on tables, counters, floors or other high-touch surfaces. Avoid leaning against furniture, walls or countertops.

### **Transporting Children, Resource Parents and Parents**

When transporting children, resource parents or parents:

- Staff are responsible for washing their hands or using alcohol-based sanitizer prior to entering the vehicle.
- Staff are responsible for ensuring that all passengers wash hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol) prior to entering the vehicle.
- Everyone should wear a face covering while in the vehicle. Children under 2 years, and anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove the mask without assistance shall not be required to wear a face covering.
- Passengers should be seated in the back seat furthest from the driver, spaced out if possible.
- Use of a van or large vehicle is preferred, if available.
- If the weather allows, windows should be opened slightly to support air flow. Avoid using the recirculated air option. No one outside of the vehicle should touch the door handles, car seats or vehicle's interior. Vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each transport (see: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Vehicles](#)). Staff are not required to wear a face covering inside the state vehicle when they are alone.
- If a passenger refuses to comply with any of the requirements listed above, then staff will put on the appropriate PPE as if that person is an individual known or suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2.

### **Parent-Child and Sibling Visits**

Please see DCF's Supporting In-Person Parent-Child and Sibling Visitation during the COVID-19 Pandemic: [A Guide for CP&P Staff and DCF-Contracted Visitation Providers](#).

### **After Every Contact**

- Wash your hands, if possible, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol) prior to entering the vehicle.
- Dispose of PPE, as appropriate.
- Clean and sanitize items you touch regularly including your phone, pen, keys, ID badge, or additional supplies.

## II. GENERAL HEALTH AND HYGIENE PRACTICES<sup>3</sup>

Staff should routinely employ infection prevention strategies to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and other viruses. Staff should:

### **Wash your hands often.**

- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth, even when you are wearing gloves

### **Avoid close contact.**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick or appear sick? even inside your home.
- If possible, maintain 6 feet of space between the sick person and other household members.
- Outside of your home, stay at least 6 feet from other people, even when wearing a mask

### **Cover your mouth and nose with face covering when around others.**

- Wear a cloth face covering in public.
- Continue to keep 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.
- In certain high-risk situations, an N95 respirator may be appropriate (See: [Determining Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment](#)).

### **Cover coughs and sneezes.**

- If you are around others and do not have your cloth face covering on, always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands afterwards or, if not possible, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

### **Clean and disinfect.**

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes doorknobs, light switches, countertops, phones and keyboards.

### **Monitor your health.**

Be alert for symptoms including cough, fever, shortness of breath or other symptoms of COVID-19. Follow [CDC](#) and [NJ DCF](#) guidance if symptoms develop.

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<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019: How to Protect Yourself and Others. Accessed from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

### III. DETERMINING APPROPRIATE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries or illness. PPE may include items such as gloves, goggles, and respirators. The type of PPE used by a DCF staff member will vary based on the level of precaution required for a given job activity. PPE should only be used when needed. The use of N95 respirators, goggles/face shields, gloves and gowns should be limited to instances where there is reasonable cause to believe exposure or infection risk is likely and close contact will be made (i.e., the staff member will come in direct physical contact or within 6 feet of a person who has been infected with or exposed to COVID-19). An example of this may be the removal of a small child from a home where the child has been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID-19. Putting on and taking off PPE requires particular care to ensure maximum protection against infection and transmission. Staff should familiarize themselves with the PPE donning and doffing processes as well as the PPE guidelines contained in this guidance document to maintain the lifespan of the PPE. See CDC Guidelines for donning and doffing PPE (see: [PPE Resources](#)).

- **PPE use when staff will not be in close physical contact with an individual known or suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2**

During most field work activities, a DCF staff member will not be in close physical contact (within 6 feet) with an individual known or suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2. In these situations, the DCF staff member should wear a cloth face covering or face mask and gloves, as appropriate (see: [Essential Protective Gear Checklist](#)).

- **PPE use when staff will be in close physical contact with an individual known or suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2**

In situations where a CDF staff member is likely to be in close physical contact (within 6 feet) with an individual known or suspected to be infected with SARS-CoV-2, the staff member should wear an N95 respirator, gloves, a face shield or goggles, and a gown, per OSHA guidelines.<sup>4</sup> Suspected or confirmed infection should be assessed using the COVID-19 screening questions (see: [Investigations and Visits to a Home](#)).

### IV. PROPER USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- **Cloth Face Coverings** – For any type of face covering, appropriate use and disposal are essential to ensure that they are effective and to avoid any increase in transmission. Self-contamination can occur by touching and reusing contaminated face coverings. Wearing cloth face coverings may be difficult for individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive, or

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<sup>4</sup> OSHA. (2020). Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19. Accessed from: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>

behavioral impairments, and is not recommended for children under 2 years old or anyone who has trouble breathing or removing them without assistance. Face coverings should never be placed on a child during nap or sleep periods. Cloth face coverings should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against face
  - Be secured with ties or ear loops
  - Include multiple layers of fabric
  - Allow for breathing without restriction
  - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
  - Not be used by anyone who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapable or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
  - Be washed after each use
- **N95 Respirators** – N95 respirators should be used only when necessary. When wearing an N95 respirator, it is important to minimize unnecessary contact with the respirator surface, adhere to hand hygiene practices, and adhere to proper Personal Protective Equipment donning and doffing technique. The masks are reusable up to 5 times as long as it is with the same user. They are not to be shared by multiple users.
    - Discard N95 respirators :
      - should they get contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from COVID-19 positive individuals.
      - following close contact with, or exit from, the care area of any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.
      - should they be obviously damaged or become hard to breathe through.
    - Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (>60%) before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary, for comfort or to maintain fit).
    - Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, perform hand hygiene as described above.
    - Use a pair of clean (non-sterile) gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal.
    - Pack or store respirators between uses so that they do not become damaged or deformed.
    - Follow the manufacturer’s user instructions, including conducting a user seal check.
    - If no manufacturer guidance is available, limit the number of reuses to no more than five uses per device to ensure an adequate safety margin.
    - Residue on masks can adversely affect the integrity of the material. Foundation, sunscreen or other forms of make-up should **NOT** be worn underneath the respirator.

- **Disposable Gloves** – In most situations, gloves are not required but may be used if available and appropriate. If using gloves, follow [CDC guidelines](#) for removing gloves to avoid contamination:
  - Using a gloved hand, grasp the palm area of the other gloved hand and peel off first glove.
  - Hold removed glove in gloved hand. Slide fingers of ungloved hand under remaining glove at wrist and peel off second glove over first glove.
  - Discard gloves in a waste container.
  - Wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) immediately after removing gloves.

## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) RESOURCES**

CDC tutorial on Donning PPE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=of73FN086E8>

CDC tutorial on Doffing PPE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQxOc13DxvQ>

CDC Sequence for Putting on PPE: <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/ppe-sequence.pdf>

CDC Guidelines for Extended Use and Limited Reuse of N95 Respirators:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>

CDC Instructions for Use of Cloth Face Coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf>

## **V. COVID-19 TESTING**

DCF staff are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 at the frequency recommended by the CDC. [Testing locations](#) are updated every Friday on [www.nj.gov](http://www.nj.gov). Staff are encouraged to visit these testing centers, or a testing center of their choice, to get tested regularly.

If a staff member tests positive for COVID-19 or becomes aware that he or she has been exposed to COVID19, the staff member must advise the [DCF Office of Human Resources](#) immediately. Staff are to take the proper action, as indicated by their physician and directed by the Office of Human Resources. The DCF Office of Human Resources has a HIPAA compliant process for notifications, which staff are to follow.

## Appendix A. Essential Protective Gear Checklist

| Staff Member Activity by Setting  | Personal Protective Equipment   | Additional Essential Protective Gear   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>Contacts Inside a Residence</b><br/>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial face-to-face investigation contact</li> <li>• Monthly visitation requirement (MVR)</li> <li>• Worker-parent visit</li> <li>• Worker-child visit</li> <li>• Family Team Meeting</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cloth face covering or face mask for DCF staff member</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gloves</li> </ul> <p><b>Close physical contact anticipated with people who are confirmed or suspected of being positive for COVID-19:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> N95 respirator for DCF staff member</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gloves</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Goggles or face shield</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gown</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra face coverings or face masks for household members (child and adult sizes)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 symptoms screening questions</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Contacts inside a CP&amp;P office</b><br/>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker-parent and sibling visits</li> <li>• Parent-child and sibling visits</li> <li>• Family Team Meeting</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cloth face covering or face mask for DCF staff member</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra face coverings or face masks for participants (child and adult sizes)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol wipes for frequently touched surfaces</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tissues/Napkins/Paper Towels</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 symptoms screening questions (<i>for parent-child and sibling visits</i>)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning supplies*</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Contacts in a non-DCF agency or community location</b><br/>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent-child and sibling visits</li> <li>• Meeting with provider agency</li> <li>• Visits to medical or legal establishments for doctor’s appointments, court, etc.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cloth face covering or face mask for DCF staff member</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Extra face coverings or face masks for participants (child and adult sizes)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol wipes for frequently touched surfaces</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> COVID-19 symptoms screening questions (<i>for parent-child and sibling visits</i>)</li> </ul>   |



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|------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Parent and child transports</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Cloth face covering or face mask for CP&P staff member<br><br><b>Close physical contact anticipated with people who are confirmed or suspected of being positive for COVID-19:</b><br><input type="checkbox"/> N95 respirator for CP&P staff member<br><input type="checkbox"/> Gloves<br><input type="checkbox"/> Goggles or face shield<br><input type="checkbox"/> Gown | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol<br><input type="checkbox"/> Extra face coverings or masks for passengers (child and adult sizes)<br><input type="checkbox"/> Tissues/Napkins/Paper Towels<br><input type="checkbox"/> Disposal Receptacle<br><input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning Supplies* |
|------------------------------------|---|--|

\*Cleaning supplies may include the following: [EPA-approved disinfectant\(s\)](#) for use against COVID-19 (for hard, non-porous and soft, porous surfaces), paper towels or reusable sponges/cloths (will need to clean between uses with dishwasher or washing machine on high temperature), thick disposable gloves, alcohol-based wipes/sprays containing at least 70% alcohol (for frequently touched surfaces), trash bags for disposal of wipes, paper towels, gloves, etc., eye protection (recommended), and disposable gowns (recommended)