

Personal Protective Equipment and COVID-19

As described in the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan, there is currently a global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) that is affecting the healthcare system. N95 respirators, surgical/procedure masks, protective wear/face shields, gloves, and gowns are critical PPE required to protect healthcare workers.

Most workers in non-healthcare settings will not require PPE to protect against COVID-19. **The University of Saskatchewan does not condone the use of defined critical PPE unless supported by an appropriate Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and/or Exposure Control Plan** that determines:

- a) The work is critical and cannot be completed at a later date;
- b) There are no alternative control measures to protect workers;
- c) There is a hazard that requires the use of critical PPE be implemented; and
- d) There is an adequate supply of needed PPE to complete the task.

Before PPE use is mandated, all other controls (such as hand hygiene, symptom screening, social/physical distancing, work-shift rotation, shielding and staying home when symptomatic or ill) must be implemented.

For assistance in completing a Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and/or Exposure Control Plan for your workplace, please contact Safety Resources at safetyresources@usask.ca.

Use of Respirators and Masks

The University of Saskatchewan does not require the use of medical (surgical/procedural) masks and respirators while in shared/common areas (e.g. corridors, lounges, etc.) on campus. For those who are required to be on campus, the university supports and encourages the use of personal non-medical masks according to the recommendation of the Public Health Agency of Canada

Wearing a non-medical mask (for example a [homemade cloth mask](#)) in the community may prevent an asymptomatic carrier of the disease from infecting others but has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. Strict hygiene and public health measures, including frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing, and refraining from going out if you are symptomatic and/or have been exposed to a confirmed case, will reduce the chance of community exposure to the virus.

If you choose to wear a mask for daily wear, do not use medical (surgical/procedural) masks and respirators designed for high-risk healthcare workers.

