



IFPN Guideline for The Use of Protective Eye Wear

Purpose:

Healthcare workers are at risk through procedures that expose them to harmful body-fluids and pathogens. Patients are at risk due to their weakened and compromised immune system. Standard Precautions identify that transmission of bloodborne and other pathogens from recognised and unrecognised sources are reduced. They are, the basic level of infection prevention principles which should be used universally, as a minimum, in the care of all patients.

The practice of Standard Precautions protects the caregiver and the patient against transmission and reduces the specific risk of contamination by bloodborne pathogens. Education in these preventative measures will provide caregivers with the methodologies to protect themselves against contamination by using the appropriate protective equipment. Facilities should provide employees and those who utilize the services of their facility with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). PPE may include but is not limited to the following: protective barriers or clothing such as overshoes, fluid-resistant gowns, gloves, masks and protective eyewear. When working or when exposed to blood or any body fluid, double gloving and eye-shields are recommended.

Protective eyewear

It is recommended that healthcare providers wear protective eyewear /faceshields during/when:

- in the scrub position;
- in the circulating position;
- the possibility of injury is increased, for example, during laser surgery and inadvertent splashes;
- there are exposures of mucous membranes of the mouth nose and eyes;
- there is exposure to splashes / sprays of blood and body-fluids; or
- during the collection of tissue, blood or body fluid specimens

Quality of Eyewear

- Protective eyewear must meet the basic safety requirements.
- Material must be resistant to puncturing, non-fogging, and have a lens that shapes to the contours of the face.
- Must be free of sharp edges and fit snugly over the eyes nose and ears of the user.

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1009	2000	Dec 2021	Every 4 years	Dec 2025



- Fit as tightly as possible to the forehead/ brow and side of the eye.
- Extend down and over the mask to prevent splashes going up under the eyewear.
- Must be scratch-free and easily decontaminated.
- Reusable (preferably).
- If disposable, used according to manufacturer instructions.
- Visors /faceshields must be attached to masks and extend to the users' forehead.
- Visors/faceshields must fit snugly around the forehead and extend over the top rim of the mask

Protection from exposure

The perioperative nurse or practitioner should adhere to the following:

- Participate in appropriate training programs/and ongoing education programs.
- Practice general infection control principles.
- Develop risk management programs, policies, and protocols for prevention of exposure.
- Undertake continuous reporting of exposure/adverse events.
- Have access to preventative immunization programs.
- Be referred to follow-up counselling and treatment after exposure.
- Have free access to anti-retroviral medication.
- Review reporting systems regularly.
- Review of risk management programs continuously.
- Follow facility, region or national regulations surrounding the use, type and wearing of protective eyewear.
- Participate in activities, programs and initiatives that raise awareness of splash prevention and compliance with recommended practices.
- Have a process for health care providers to follow when a splash does occur and implement a plan of action based on the patient assessment of risk.
- Follow-up mechanism of incidents and support for workers who have been exposed.

Care of Eyewear

- Regular visual inspections of eyewear to ensure that lenses clean, clear, unscratched and intact.
- Cleaned after use, according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Stored in a safe place, where it cannot be scratched.
- If disposable discarded following manufacturers recommendations.

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References:

- ACORN (2018) Australian College of Perioperative Nurses: **Standards for Perioperative Nursing in Australia.**
- AfPP (2016) Association for Perioperative Practice: Harrogate UK: **Standards and Recommendations for Safe Perioperative Practice.**
- AORN (2019) Association of PeriOperative Registered Nurses: Denver USA: **Perioperative Standards and Recommended Practices.**
- ORNAC (2017) Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada: **Standards for Perioperative Nursing Practice.**
- WHO Standard Precautions in Healthcare. [standard-precautions-in-health-care.pdf \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/standard-precautions-in-health-care-pdf-(who.int))

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