

## Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

EH&S has considered the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) [Occupational Risk](#) levels and the [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries](#) criteria to characterize work at the different risk exposure levels, consisting of high, medium, and low. The requirements of the [UW COVID-19 Face Covering Policy](#) were also incorporated

The risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, may vary from high to a relatively low risk. The level of risk depends in part on the work environment, type of work performed, the vaccination status of the community and the individual performing the work\*, and the potential for close contact for a repeated or extended period of time.

Visit the EH&S website for more information about [COVID-19 prevention](#). Additional information about the Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19 for the UW community is on the [Novel coronavirus & COVID-19: facts and resources](#) webpage.

All types of PPE must be:

- Selected based upon the potential exposure hazard to the worker.
- Properly fitted and periodically refitted, as applicable (e.g., respirators).
- Consistently and properly worn when required.
- Regularly inspected, maintained, and replaced, as necessary.
- Properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment.

All departments and responsible parties should document their PPE plans and requirements, including approvals for any exceptions.

Note that **this guidance does not apply to those in health care, child care, youth program, K-12, or public transit work settings**. Individuals in a health care workplace should follow the [UW Medicine](#) (log-in required) or other specified infection prevention protocols for PPE assignment. Those in childcare, youth programs, or K-12 settings should follow Washington State Department of Health requirements for [childcare](#) and [schools](#). UW shuttle drivers should follow established unit-specific PPE protocols.

## COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Risk Level Summary

Risk Level	Risk Description	Example Job Role / Activity	Personal Protective Equipment
<b>High</b>	Jobs indoors with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab/research personnel collecting/handling specimens from known or suspected COVID-19 positive patients</li> <li>• UW Police / Campus Safety and Security (during close contact with known or suspected COVID-19 positive individuals)</li> <li>• Custodians performing cleaning/disinfection within 24 hours of a COVID-19 positive person being in that space</li> <li>• Some COVID-19 research personnel as per <a href="#">COVID-19 Research Biosafety Guidance</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respirator (N95, PAPR, or tight-fitting cartridge-style respirator)</li> <li>• Face shield, chemical goggles, or safety glasses</li> <li>• Disposable gown</li> <li>• Disposable gloves</li> <li>• Other appropriate PPE as necessary (e.g., BSL-3 work)</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	Jobs indoors that require frequent/close contact** with people who may be not fully vaccinated, but who are not known to be infected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Line cooks of mixed vaccination status sharing a small kitchen</li> <li>• Researchers of mixed vaccination status working closer than 6' at a lab bench</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical/procedure mask</li> <li>• Face shield or splash barrier (optional, for use during close contact)</li> <li>• Disposable gloves (optional)</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	Jobs that do not require contact with people known to be or suspected to be infected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Service</li> <li>• Housing Hall Desks</li> <li>• Cashiers</li> <li>• Custodians</li> <li>• Maintenance (including FOMS)</li> <li>• Utility and Infrastructure</li> <li>• Security Guards</li> <li>• Laboratory Staff</li> <li>• Animal Care Staff</li> <li>• Mail Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cloth face coverings required* when working in areas where others are present and there is no exposure to hazardous materials (e.g., hazardous chemical use, work with biohazards).</li> <li>• Medical/procedure mask if working with hazardous materials, along with other appropriate PPE.</li> </ul>

\*Face coverings are required to be worn indoor whenever other people are present and in share vehicles. This includes common areas such as hallways, stairways, restrooms, and elevators. A face covering is encouraged for all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, when in outdoor crowded settings and settings where there is a decreased ability to consistently maintain a physical distance between others. Refer to the [UW COVID-19 Face Covering Policy](#) for further details.

\*\*Close contact means being within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of at least 15 minutes during a 24-hour period (even if both persons are wearing face coverings), living with or caring for a person who has COVID-19, or having direct contact with infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils).