

COVID-19: Personal Protective Equipment Central Supply

Information on PPE and the supply of PPE from Health New Zealand Central Supply to health care workers contributing to the COVID-19 response.

**(Health NZ, 2024e)
[1 Oct 2023]**

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Central Supply of PPE overview

Since April 2020, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and some consumables for New Zealand's COVID-19 response has been sourced and distributed as part of a national coordinated approach.

This national coordinated approach has ensured PPE supplies and some consumables could be prioritised to areas most in need during the COVID-19 pandemic, that there was equitable access to PPE across the health and disability sector, and overall management of supplies was at a national level.

[Principles of Supply \(/for-health-professionals/covid-19/information-for-health-professionals/personal-protective-equipment-central-supply/ppe-principles-of-supply-and-eligibility/\)](https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/for-health-professionals/covid-19/information-for-health-professionals/personal-protective-equipment-central-supply/ppe-principles-of-supply-and-eligibility/) have guided Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora's distribution of publicly funded PPE to healthcare service providers and wider PPE users (when required) and aligned with national infection prevention and control (IP&C) guidance for PPE use in community healthcare settings and the Government's response settings throughout the duration of the pandemic.

As we move towards managing COVID-19 in a similar way to other public health diseases, alignment with the next phase of response management is necessary therefore, changes have been made to the Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora PPE Central Supply.

Discontinuation of funded PPE products and other consumables

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From 1 October 2023, publicly funded PPE and other consumables from the Central Supply will discontinue on a product-by-product basis as surplus stock is run down to reach Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora's minimum reserve holding level for national pandemic preparedness.

As at end of February 2024, the forecasted months for when core PPE products are expected to discontinue are shown below:

Product type	Estimated last month of supply
Alcohol-based disinfectant wipes	No longer available
Alcohol-free disinfectant wipes	Not currently available
Alcohol-based hand sanitiser – 500ml	June 2024+
Alcohol-based hand sanitiser – 2L	June 2024+
Biohazard bags	June 2024
Cap – disposable	No longer available
Cap – surgical	June 2024+
Goggles	June 2024+
Isolation gowns	No longer available
Isolation gowns – size XXXL	No longer available
Gowns XXXL (level 1)	June 2024+
Masks – P2/N95 particulate respirator	June 2024+
Masks – medical (Type II R or equivalent)	May 2024
Masks – level 3 (tie back)	June 2024+

Nitrile gloves (sizes S, M, L)	No longer available
Nitrile gloves (size XL)	May 2024
Overshoes	April 2024
Plastic disposable aprons	April 2024
Safety glasses	June 2024+
Transparent full-face shields	June 2024 +

NOTE: These dates are based on forecast consumption and are subject to change. To keep this information as current as possible, it will be updated on a monthly basis. Specific PPE products available to health service providers are shown on the ordering portal. It is our intention to inform providers a minimum of three months prior to a product being discontinued from the central supply. Consideration is being given to access to the central supply beyond June 2024. When decisions are made, these will be communicated.

Continued pandemic preparedness

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora will manage national stockpiles of core PPE and other consumables for pandemic usage to support continued preparedness and response.

This national reserve stockpile will ensure that health service providers will have continued access to specific critical supplies during large or prolonged emergencies that generate unusually high demands on normal health service stocks or supply chains.

Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora will prioritise access to this reserve stockpile for the wider health and disability sector on direction from Manatū Hauora.

Infection prevention and control guidance for PPE use

The responsibility of healthcare employers is to provide a safe workplace for their employees and should be considered within the context of the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html) (<https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2015/0070/latest/DLM5976660.html>).

It is important that the most appropriate PPE is available and worn correctly and safely for the work, task or procedure you are undertaking. PPE use in healthcare settings should be used in

conjunction with Te Whatu Ora national infection prevention and control guidance.

Please refer to [COVID-19 Infection prevention and control recommendations for health and disability care workers \(/for-health-professionals/covid-19/information-for-health-professionals/infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations-for-health-and-disability-care-workers/\)](#) for guidance and resources to aid decision making on PPE selection for healthcare workers.

Procurement of PPE

Those responsible for the procurement of PPE should have a sound understanding on what their needs are including short-, medium- and long-term requirements. Ensure that any PPE purchased meet all relevant manufacturing standards for certification for use within Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Use of a procurement team or ensuring there has been subject matter expertise is important to ensure that PPE items are 'fit for purpose'.

PPE procured for the COVID-19 response was dually managed through use of the World Health Organization's [Technical specification of personal protective equipment for COVID-19 \(https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-PPE_specifications-2020.1\)](#) and through National IPC guidance. This World Health Organization specification guidance contains relevant information on the quality, performance characteristics and related standards of PPE that can still be referred to.

Storage of PPE

PPE should be stored as per the manufacturer's recommendations on the packaging – generally this includes being stored in a dry environment, away from direct sunlight, within appropriate temperature ranges, and should be stored at least 40mm off the ground. Consideration to health and safety practices should be considered to minimise injury to those accessing and moving boxes or equipment.

In the absence of any storage recommendations, whenever possible use 25°C and 60% relative humidity as a default storage condition. This refers to the environmental limits which New Zealand uses to test the long-term stability of medicine as a guide for appropriate conditions.

Physically damaged PPE must not be used, however, PPE within damaged packaging should be visually inspected by a Health Professional to determine if it can be used in the intended manner it is designed for.

Expired PPE should not be used due to the possibility of reduced protection for the user. In situations where a product is of short supply and unable to be replaced by an alternative, or under other exceptional circumstances, extensions to product use should be sought from the product manufacturer or on discussion and agreement with Occupational Health and IP&C professionals.

PPE that is not fit for purpose (damaged or expired) should be disposed of in a way that reduces the risk of PPE inadvertently being used in a healthcare setting, and in accordance with product disposal instructions.

Safe disposal of used PPE

Please follow product disposal instructions.

In a healthcare setting, used PPE may be considered controlled waste. Healthcare facilities should ensure that controlled waste is being handled as per the Management of Health Care Waste Standard (NZS 4304:2002).

In a community setting, used PPE can be put into the household general waste if appropriate.

Provider queries

Please direct any further questions from providers to COVID.HealthSupplyChain@health.govt.nz (<mailto:COVID.HealthSupplyChain@health.govt.nz>)

Also in this section

[COVID-19: Advice for all health professionals \(/for-health-professionals/covid-19/information-for-health-professionals/covid-19-advice-for-all-health-professionals/\)](#)

[Caring for people with COVID-19 in the community \(/for-health-professionals/covid-19/information-for-health-professionals/caring-for-](#)