

**KP NATIONAL GUIDANCE ON PPE FOR COVID-19**  
**Effective January 3, 2022**

The following guidance serves as an update on the use of Personal Protective Equipment for Kaiser Permanente and reflects the most current data on COVID-19 variants as well as [recent updates to Federal OSHA requirements](#). This document does not supersede local nor state public health department jurisdictions *should those requirements be stricter*.

Situation		PPE Requirements
<b>Clinical Area</b> Patient <b>IS</b> a COVID-19 PUI and/or is <b>POSITIVE</b> for COVID-19	Aerosol Generating Procedure being performed	<b>In CA:</b> PAPR/CAPR <sup>1</sup> required <b>Outside CA:</b> N-95 respirator required <sup>2</sup> PAPR/CAPR or elastomeric mask encouraged by Fed OSHA  Gown and gloves Eye protection is needed if not wearing a PAPR/CAPR
	No Aerosol Generating Procedure	N-95 respirator <sup>2</sup>  Eye protection, isolation gown and gloves
<b>Clinical Area</b> Patient <b>IS NOT</b> a COVID-19 PUI and patient is <b>NOT</b> Positive for COVID-19	Aerosol Generating Procedure being performed	N-95 respirator <sup>2</sup> or isolation mask  Eye protection, gown and gloves as indicated per standard precautions for potential splashing or spraying
	No Aerosol Generating Procedure	Isolation/procedure mask  Eye protection recommended  <b>All KP Regions:</b> N-95 respirator may be used if requested <sup>3,4</sup>
<b>Non-Clinical Areas</b>		Isolation/procedure mask <b>must</b> be worn  <b>All KP Regions:</b> N-95 respirator may be used if requested <sup>3,4</sup>
<b>Indoor Employee Break Area/Cafeteria</b>		Isolation/procedure masks <b>must</b> be worn.  Masks may not be removed unless eating/drinking and 6 feet physical distancing is maintained. <sup>6</sup>

1. PAPR/CAPR requires training prior to use.
2. Medical clearance and fit testing is required prior to use. If individual fails fit test, PAPR/CAPR or elastomeric respirator to be used.
3. Consult with local Employee Health or Environmental Health and Safety to track issuance of voluntary respirators for those who request them. Training materials/flyers must be provided at the time the voluntary respirator is issued.
4. Where applicable, must comply with Fed OSHA Mini Respiratory Program: <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.504>
5. Note that for CA markets, per CDPH Health Order, unvaccinated or partially vaccinated staff must be provided respirators who work indoors with patients or residents.
6. Reference Building Space Activation Playbook (BSAP) for guidance on break room standards (page 43). [Building Space Activation Playbook](#)

## FAQs

### **Why are there changes in the masking guidance now?**

*This update is intended to bring Kaiser Permanente into alignment with the most recent Federal OSHA Emergency Temporary standards. The detailed guidelines can be found [here](#).*

### **What eye protection is necessary when caring for a COVID-19 patient?**

*COVID-19 can be spread by mucous membrane exposure to a patient's secretions. Eye protection worn should provide sufficient protection to avoid droplets from landing in the eyes. Full face shields or goggles are the preferred eye protection.*

### **My local public health department's regulations are different than KP's. What should I do?**

*If your local health jurisdiction has stricter guidance than Kaiser Permanente's, you need to follow their regulation. If your local health jurisdiction is more permissive than Kaiser Permanente's, please follow Kaiser Permanente's requirements. If you have questions, please contact your local Infection Prevention and Control department for assistance.*

### **How do we know if a person is a "PUI" for COVID-19?**

*A PUI (person under investigation) is an individual who is suspected to have COVID-19. Preliminary data from a [UK research study](#) found the most common symptoms of the COVID-19 Omicron variant are runny nose, headache, fatigue, sneezing and sore throat. Additional [symptoms of COVID-19](#) include fevers or chills, cough, shortness of breath, muscle / body aches, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting and new loss of taste or smell.*

### **What is the Omicron variant?**

*The Omicron variant is the most recent version of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. It appears to be much more contagious than the prior Delta variant. It also appears to cause symptoms faster than prior variants, with most individuals developing COVID-19 symptoms within 2-3 days of exposure.*

### **What's the best way to protect myself in the workplace?**

*The best way to protect yourself against COVID-19 is to do the following:*

- *Get vaccinated against COVID-19 and if you are already vaccinated, get your booster shot*
- *Wear your mask at all times in the workplace unless you are eating or drinking and 6 feet of social distancing can be maintained*
- *Maintain social distancing in the workplace whenever possible*
- *Don't come to work sick; encourage teammates to stay home if sick*
- *Get tested promptly for COVID-19 if you develop symptoms*
- *Encourage everyone to stay safe outside of work, as well, by social distancing, masking, and frequent hand hygiene*

### **Are we going to run out of PPE?**

*Currently, Kaiser Permanente's personal protective equipment supplies remain robust. This includes N-95 masks, isolation/procedure masks, gowns, gloves, and eye protection.*

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