
Updated Eye Protection Guidelines 1.26.21
(For all UNMH Staff and Providers at all locations – clinical and non-clinical)

COVID-19 community transmission has increased across the United States, including New Mexico, and particularly Bernalillo County. People can transmit the virus that causes COVID-19 even when they have no symptoms. The eyes, nose and mouth are all portals of entry for COVID-19 infection.

We require all personnel wear eye protection at all times in addition to procedure mask or N95, to ensure the eyes, nose and mouth are all protected from exposure.

Eye protection **provides a benefit during patient care as well as during interactions with colleagues, visitors and in an office setting.** It is recommended that eye protection be worn continuously while at work:

- Don eye protection at the beginning of shift. Doff and clean at the end of shift. **“Don it and forget it”**
- Do not place eye protection on your head. Placing eye protection on your head increases the chance of self-contamination.
- Do not place eye protection around your work station. They should be kept on to ensure use during all **patient and colleague interactions** (i.e. Patient rooms, hallways, breakrooms).
- When you don't abide by COVID-safe practices: You put yourself, your colleagues, and patients at risk for acquiring COVID.

All personnel will continue to have access to eye protection provided by UNMH, but some may desire to use their own eye protection for comfort, fit and to meet their individual needs.

Note that use of personal eye protection is a specific exception to the policy of non-use of privately owned PPE and must follow the guidelines below. UNM Hospitals does not anticipate allowing the use of privately-owned respirator masks now or in the future given the strong supply chain and more technical nature of this equipment.

For those who desire to use their own eye protection, guidance and recommendations are outlined below.

- Eye protection must be commercially produced.
- Full coverage of the eyes from above the brow line to below the eyes with wrap around sides is necessary. A larger area of protection is preferred.
- Eye protection which seals to the face can provide additional protection in some situations.
- The eye protection should be able to be cleaned using an alcohol or hydrogen peroxide wipe.
- In the OR and procedural settings acceptable eye protection consists of one of the following options: TIDI Shield eye protection, surgical masks with attached eye shields, Stryker surgical hoods, or a full face shield.
- CAPR/PAPRs have built in face shields that obviate the need for additional eye protection.
- Personal glasses designed only for distance/reading are not considered adequate protection in clinical environments unless they meet the requirements described above.
- Personal glasses designed only for distance/reading with added side shields are adequate in non-clinical environments.