



The Safety Bulletin has been created to provide ongoing direction to health care workers regarding the recommended safety guidelines, processes and personal protective equipment (PPE) supply. If you have any questions about PPE, Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) or safety as it relates to COVID-19 please call the OHS Hotline at 1-833-233-4403 or email

[OHS\\_Healthcareworkers\\_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:OHS_Healthcareworkers_COVID19@saskhealthauthority.ca) or [infectioncontrol@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:infectioncontrol@saskhealthauthority.ca)

### Fit testing all staff who do not work from home:

As per IHICC/EOC direction, SHA will now be **fit testing every SHA health care worker (HCW) that cannot work from home**. This means that if a HCW is **required** to come into facility as per their work scope they will be required to be fit tested to an N95 respirator. If there is any possibility for the HCW to complete their work activities from home or not within SHA facility then these HCW's are not required to be fit tested.

**In order to be successful in this initiative SHA leaders and HCW are asked to prioritize this work.**

At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to create a provincial fit testing strategy were put on hold and resources shifted to quickly and efficiently fit test priority staff and physicians who were identified as requiring an N95 respirator for [Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures \(AGMPs\)](#). **Respirators in the context of COVID-19 continue to only be needed for AGMPs**. Fit Testing for priority groups have largely been completed and resources can now focus on fit testing other SHA staff and physicians to meet our legislative requirements.

According to the Occupational Health & Safety Regulations (OH&S), 1996, it is the Saskatchewan Health Authority's (SHA) responsibility to ensure that the worker (and contractor) use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and that PPE is maintained and fits appropriately to protect the worker from hazards. To meet this legislative responsibility Quality and Safety (Q&S) teams are in the process of developing plans on how to prioritize and roll out this task to be accomplished within the target dates for completion.

The fit testing status of individuals with an SHA employee number and practitioners who hold practitioner staff membership will be tracked in the newly developed [Respirator Registry \(RR\)](#). Operational leaders, supervisors, educators and physician leaders are able to view the respiratory protection status of their team enabling them to quickly understanding of who needs to be fitted to a respirator; and ensure the sufficient supply of required respirators are available.

### More information

- For more information please read the [Huddle Talk for Fit Testing](#).

#### Respiratory Protection Program

The Saskatchewan Health Authority has a Respiratory Protection Program to ensure that all SHA staff and physicians have access to and are properly fitted with an N95 respirator or equivalent.

The SHA's Fit Testing Strategy ensures that those who needed to use a respirator are properly fitted to at least one respirator.

##### Fit Testing:

Respirators come in different sizes and must be properly fit to each individual to ensure that a seal is formed between the wearer and the respirator. This is done through fit testing to ensure that the HCW is wearing the correct size respirator.

Please talk with your manager if you require fit testing to an N95 respirator for your daily work.

For more information about the SHA Fit Testing Strategy [click here](#).

#### Respirator Registry

[To access the registry click here](#)

If you are a director/manager/fit tester and do not have access please contact [respiratorregistrysupport@saskhealthauthority.ca](mailto:respiratorregistrysupport@saskhealthauthority.ca) (please include your city/town in the email subject line)

[Respirator Registry FAQs](#)  
[Key messages and Q&A](#)  
[Respirator Registry Detailed FAQ](#)





- Information about the Respirator Registry can be found on the [Quality and Safety department page](#) on the SHA Intranet

### Vaccination is key but you must still protect yourselves:

Receiving your COVID-19 vaccination as soon as you are able to is an important step in protecting yourselves, our patients/residents, and the ones you love. The COVID-19 vaccine provides you with an additional protection against the virus in the event of a personal protective equipment (PPE) breach. However, being immunized against COVID-19 **does not mean that you no longer have to follow the Public Health Orders or safety guidelines put in place by the SHA**. The vaccine has not yet been proven to prevent asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 and **PPE precautions must still remain in place when in a situation that requires them**.

A protective immune response takes time to build up in the body and during this time you are not immune to the virus. You may also find that you are experiencing COVID-like symptoms, post vaccination. If you feel ill or have any symptoms, do not come to work until symptoms have subsided. Most vaccine related symptoms settle within 2 days of vaccination. HCWs who develop respiratory or unexpected symptoms after vaccination are asked to call the OH&S hotline for guidance. The Safety Task Force has developed an algorithm for HCWs who develop symptoms after vaccination to understand which symptoms require isolation and testing and when you can still come to work which can be found at [Saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers](https://saskatchewan.ca/covid19-providers).

Given the currently limited information on how much the COVID-19 vaccines may reduce transmission in the general population and how long protection lasts, **vaccinated HCWs are required to continue to follow safety protocols with respect to PPE, physical distancing and groups sizes as set out by the [SHA](#) and [Public Health Orders](#)**.

HCW's who have been immunized are also still required to self-isolate for the recommended time frame of 14-days if they have been identified as a close-contact. As efficacy in terms of preventing asymptomatic transmission after receiving the vaccine has not yet been established, isolation periods must be observed.

Vaccination is an important step in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, however we must all remain vigilant in our PPE practices and continue to follow expert guidance that has been based on the most current research available. Please continue to read the SHA Daily Rounds and the SHA Safety Bulletin to stay informed about any changes to the immunization campaign or safety guidance.

