

Continuous Masking

Personal Care/Group/Residential Homes

Guidelines for Continuous Masking

When following continuous masking procedures in your home, ensure that all staff and others who work in resident care areas or travel through those areas, including common spaces (lobbies, hallways, elevators, etc.), wear a medical grade mask. This is an important resident safety measure.

- Supply masks at the beginning of a shift, ideally as part of the staff daily screening process, or before an individual can walk through or work in a resident care area.
- All staff and others will continue to perform hand hygiene when they enter the building, frequently throughout their shift, and where indicated.
- The mask must be discarded and replaced when it becomes wet (e.g., through breathing) damaged, or soiled (e.g., blood or body fluids), when going on a scheduled break, and discarded at the end of a shift.
 - If it starts to get harder to breathe, this is a good indication that your mask is wet; this is when it is time to change your mask.
- Staff and others who do not work in resident care areas or travel through a resident care area should continue to practice physical distancing and proper hand hygiene. Should these staff or others anticipate working in or travelling through a resident care area during their shift, they must obtain a mask prior to entering a resident care area. The use of personal non-medical masks (e.g., cloth) is not recommended.
- Masks can be used for multiple resident interactions.
- In the event a resident is suspect positive COVID-19, contact 811 for direction. If a resident in your home has a positive test result for COVID-19, public health officials systematically receive the positive results and will reach out to you with assistance on how to manage the situation. This may include the provision of appropriate PPE, but this does not negate the need to have extra PPE available and ready if an outbreak occurs.

What to know about wearing masks for extended periods of time:

- Avoid touching the mask while wearing it.
- Remove the mask using the appropriate technique; do not touch the front of the mask.
- After removal or whenever a mask is inadvertently touched, clean hands using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Do not pull the mask off and put around your neck or forehead, as this will increase the risk for spreading infections.
- Make sure the mask is covering both your mouth and your nose.
- Further information related to PPE accessed at www.saswh.ca in the IPAC section