

Enhanced COVID-19 prevention measures for police services in Nunavik communities with an alert level of orange or red

November 16, 2021

The recommendations in this document apply to work environments in communities with an alert level of orange or red and where the epidemiological situation, under the current directives of the Nunavik department of Public Health, calls for enhanced prevention measures.

It is currently known that the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted by persons who exhibit symptoms (symptomatic) as well as persons who are infected with the disease but are either presymptomatic or asymptomatic. The risk of airborne transmission is much higher when there is close contact with one or more contaminated persons. There is, however, also a risk at distances of more than 2 metres, as illustrated by proof of transmission by the inhalation of organic liquid aerosols of 100 µm or less. Aerosols infected with the virus can remain in the air for hours, and travel more than 1 to 2 metres from the infected person who expelled them; this could generate new infections mainly at a close distance but also further away.

The risk of transmission is higher in poorly ventilated spaces or crowded areas, as well as when there is prolonged exposure. The risk of contamination due to inhalation can be limited by adopting various protective measures, including full vaccination, physical distancing, adequate ventilation of rooms and other areas, and the wearing of a mask or an N95 respirator. All of the measures discussed in this document are complementary, and should be applied at all times to reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus and its variants and by extension, limit the risk of outbreaks in work environments.

It bears noting that the COVID-19 prevention measures referred to in this document were taken from police officers and security agents measures discussed in further detail in the various references listed at the end of this text. Employers are responsible for understanding all of the measures applicable to their specific activities and ensuring that these are implemented and adhered to. **These COVID-19 prevention measures are in addition to the usual health and safety measures that all police officers must comply with.**

Note that all citizens in communities with an alert level of orange or red should be considered as potentially contagious, regardless of whether or not they present with COVID-19 symptoms and whether or not they are vaccinated.

The safety of police officers must not be diminished or put at risk by the wearing of personal protective equipment against COVID-19. Every situation must be assessed prior to proceeding with an intervention.

Full vaccination

- Promote the full vaccination (2 doses) of all employees.
- While vaccination does not offer a blanket protection, it greatly decreases the risk of contracting the virus and for persons who become infected, the risk of falling ill, being hospitalized or dying, as well as the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus to others. This critical measure must nonetheless be accompanied by other measures to achieve optimal prevention.



Screening of symptomatic employees

- Advise employees to not go to work (i.e., to stay home) if they present with COVID-19 symptoms. Signs for this purpose can be put up. See the following:
 - In Inuktitut: https://nrbhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/flyer_decision_tree_workplace_r1_IN.pdf
 - In English: https://nrbhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/flyer_decision_tree_workplace_r1_EN.pdf
 - In French: https://nrbhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/flyer_decision_tree_workplace_r1_FR.pdf
- An employee who is symptomatic and goes to work or who develops symptoms while at his workplace should immediately go home.
- The employee should also call either the CLSC (local community service centre) or Info-Santé (COVID-19) (1 888 662-7482) and follow the instructions provided.
- When applicable, employees must comply with public health isolation guidelines.

Respiratory etiquette

- Promote and ensure compliance with respiratory etiquette measures. All employees should:
 - Cough and sneeze in the crook of their elbow.
 - Blow their nose in a tissue that they will immediately throw in a no-contact trashcan. They should then wash their hands (immediately or as soon as possible).
 - Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with their hands, whether or not they are wearing gloves.

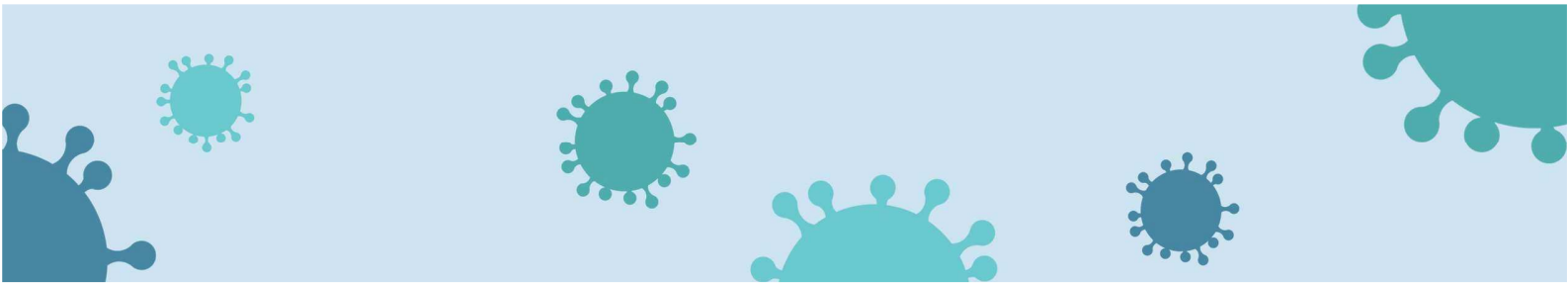
Hand Hygiene

- Promote and ensure compliance with hand hygiene measures by providing employees with water, soap, a hydroalcoholic solution (minimum of 60% alcohol), no-contact trashcans, single-use tissues or towelettes, etc.
- Provide employees with disinfectant wipes for instances where they have no access to soap and water (e.g., while in their vehicle).
- Employees must regularly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds. They should, at a minimum, do so when they arrive at work and before they leave, before and after a break or a meal, after they have a smoke or vape, after taking off their gloves or mask, and after using the washroom.

Ventilation

- Ventilation in police stations should be ensured by a mechanized ventilation system with fresh air changes.
 - It is also recommended, whenever possible, to resort to “natural” ventilation, by opening windows for at least 10-15 minutes once or twice a day, and more often if possible. In buildings with no integrated ventilation system, rooms will need to be aired out for longer, and more often.
 - It is recommended, whenever possible, to decrease the concentration of aerosols by relying on HEPA¹ filters. These filters can eliminate up to 99.97% of aerosol particles.

¹ Acronym for high-efficiency particulate air.



- When aboard a vehicle, never set the air ventilation system to “recirculate”. If possible, open the windows instead.

Regularly and appropriately wearing a medical mask or N95 Respirator Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)²

- **When indoors**, a medical mask should be worn at all times when indoors, regardless of the distance between individuals or whether or not any police officers have been partners, in the same vehicle, for a certain while. **If they are available in sufficient quantities, N95 respirators³** should be worn instead of medical masks⁴ at all times when indoors. **N95 respirators** should also be the face covering of choice **when closely (at a distance less than 2 meters) interacting with citizens, regardless of the duration.**

- The N95 respirator, because it is so airtight and impervious, provides optimal protection against contamination through particle inhalation. Police officers, however, must undergo a fit test⁵ to ensure the N95 is properly sealed. They must also know how to wear it appropriately and how to do the seal check test each time the N95 respirator is put on. This face covering must be in direct contact with clean skin and may not be “hindered” by facial or other hair. Any beard must be freshly shaven.



- A medical mask, however, is not designed to be fitted to one’s face. As such, i.e., because it is not sealed, it is not as effective at preventing contamination by inhalation as is the N95 respirator. To limit the risk of contamination through inhalation, the medical mask must be properly worn, i.e., fully cover the nose, mouth and chin.



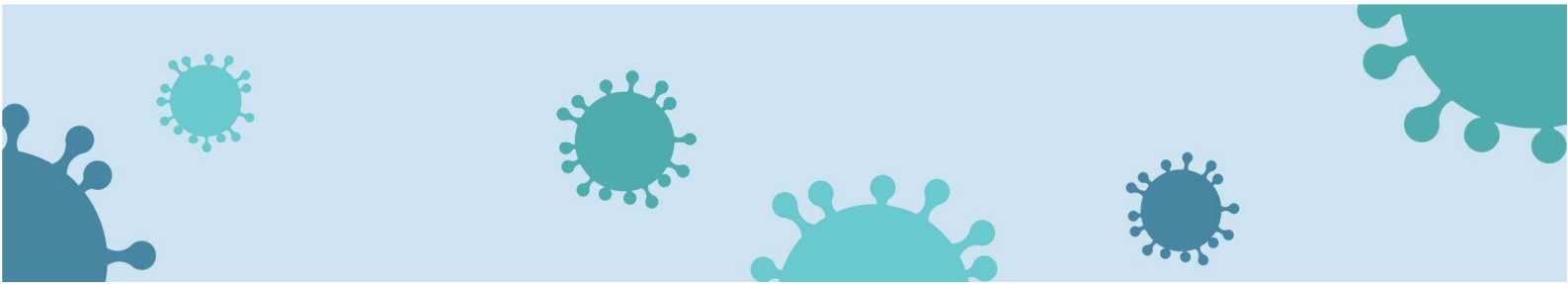
- **When outdoors**, whenever police officers may need to closely interact with a citizen (at a distance of less than 2 metres), **wearing an N95 respirator or at the very last, a medical mask**, is recommended.
- Wearing a medical mask or an N95 respirator is not necessary in the following situations (however, the site or room involved should be adequately ventilated, with a HEPA filter or other):
 - When an employee is alone in a closed room.
 - At mealtime (contingent on everyone respecting the physical distancing requirement of 2 metres). Masks, however, can only be removed immediately before eating and must be donned immediately thereafter.
 - Where an employee’s working conditions make the wearing of a medical mask or an N95 respirator hazardous or inappropriate.

² Medical masks that comply with the ASTM F2100 standards (level 1 being sufficient) or certified EN 14683 type IIR or BNQ 1922-900 and designed for use in the workplace (<https://www.bnq.qc.ca/fr/normalisation/protection-et-surete/masques>).

³ A model without an exhalation valve is recommended to provide bi-directional protection.

⁴ For further details on the degree of protection offered by the medical mask and the N95 Respirator Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), see page 5 of the following document: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/sites/default/files/publications/3118-masque-medical-continuum-lieux-travail-variants-covid19.pdf>.

⁵ The proper wearing of an N95 respirator PPE must be supervised by a respiratory protection program as stipulated by sections 45 and following of the *Regulation respecting occupational health and safety (ROHS, c. S-2.1, r.13)*. You can refer to the *Réseau de santé publique en santé au travail* Website: <https://www.santeautravail.qc.ca/web/rspat/dossiers/protection-respiratoire>



- Note that an employee's N95 respirator or medical mask must be changed during breaks or every four hours. They should also be changed more frequently if they become wet, soiled or damaged.
- Washing one's hands before putting on or removing an N95 respirator or a medical mask is highly recommended. Once a mask has been removed, it should be thrown into a no-contact trashcan.
- An N95 respirator or medical mask can be worn outdoors in the winter, either alone or underneath a neck warmer (e.g., fleece or other warm fabric).

Wearing eye protection (safety glasses or a face shield)

- When in close contact (at a distance of less than 2 metres) with a citizen who is not wearing a medical mask, workers must wear eye protection that fully covers the sides of the eyes (i.e., safety glasses or a face shield) in addition to an N95 respirator or a medical mask.
- Eye protection can be removed when their use in the given circumstances could pose a risk to the safety of employees.

Physical distancing

- **Whenever possible, physical distancing of at least 2 metres must be complied with at all times,** even when wearing a mask.
- Employees should take particular care to ensure that physical distancing measures are adhered to during breaks and meals, especially when no medical mask or N95 respirator is worn.
- Whenever possible, employees should remain at a distance of at least 2 metres when conducting citizen interventions, and keep these interventions as short as possible.
- Eating in a work vehicle is not recommended, as it calls for removing one's mask in a situation where physical distancing is for all intents and purposes impossible.
- All direct contact (handshakes, hugs) is to be avoided.

Cleaning and disinfection

- **Clean the objects and surfaces frequently touched by employees** at the police station, while in their vehicle, in the break room or lunchroom, in washrooms, etc. (tables, chairs, microwave, door handles, desks, telephones, steering wheels, turn signal arms, interior and exterior vehicle door handles). **This should be done at least once per shift.**
- **Clean and disinfect** all areas (work areas, cells, washrooms and showers) **where a Covid-positive worker or a citizen spent time.**
 - When possible and as a precaution, limit access to the rooms used by the person for an hour after his departure, prior to beginning the cleaning and disinfection process.
 - If applicable, have the mechanized ventilation system push as much fresh air into the room in question as possible, or open any windows.
 - Make sure to allow adequate contact time with surfaces, so that the disinfectant can render the virus inactive (follow manufacturer's recommendations).
 - Once the disinfection process is completed, the rooms can be considered ready for use.



Signage/posters

Signs and posters reiterating the importance of identifying COVID-19 symptoms and practicing the necessary prevention measures (respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, wearing of a mask and physical distancing) should be set up in strategic areas.

Identification of symptoms and case management:

- In Inuktitut: https://nrhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/flyer_decision_tree_workplace_r1_IN.pdf
- In English: https://nrhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/flyer_decision_tree_workplace_r1_EN.pdf
- In French: https://nrhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/flyer_decision_tree_workplace_r1_FR.pdf

Let's continue to protect ourselves / On continue de se protéger:

- [Let's continue to protect ourselves! – COVID-19 - Publication from the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)
- [On continue de se protéger! – COVID-19 - Publication from the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)

Washing hands – Simple and effective / Le lavage des mains – Simple et efficace:

- [Washing hands - Simple and effective – Self-Adhesive Poster - Publication from the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)
- [Le lavage des mains - Simple et efficace - Poster - Publication from the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)

Protégeons-nous contre la Covid – Procédure du port du masque (wearing a mask to protect ourselves against COVID-19, available in French only):

- [Protégeons-nous contre la COVID-19 – Port du masque - Publication from the ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux \(gouv.qc.ca\)](#)

How to Properly Put on and Take off a Disposable Respirator (NIOSH, available in English only):

- <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-133/pdfs/2010-133.pdf>

Videos

Respirator Fit Testing (available in English only)

- U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Length : 12 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D38BjgUdL5U>

Note : Although the fit testing procedure is well explained, the viewer needs to be aware that the USA regulation is slightly different than the Quebec one (cf. Regulation respecting occupational health and safety — ROHS, c. S-2.1, r.13).

Procedure to Properly put on and take off an N95 respirator, including seal check (available in English only)

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Length : 2 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oU4stQgCtV8>
- Université du Nebraska. Length : 5 minutes.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BnXN1OD6VRw>

