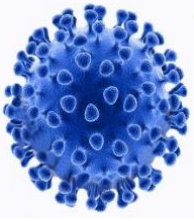


Advisory for work in Public Safety



With widespread person to person community transmission of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in the New York metropolitan area, we want to advise and reinforce our Public Safety personnel **to protect themselves from the virus**. We have provided this Advisory so that personnel can take crucial measures to keep the virus from spreading further.

How can I best protect myself while at work?

- **Social distancing, maintain at least 6 feet of separation from others, when possible. This is the safe distance for conversations and any interaction.**
- **Practice essential prevention hygiene: frequent handwashing, coughing/sneezing into your elbow or a tissue (throw away); sanitizing high-touch surfaces including touchscreens; avoid touching your face with unwashed hands; waving/elbow bumping instead of shaking hands; do not share food/drink.**
- **Wear the “one-mask” provided while on duty.**
- **Stay home if you are sick.**
- **In general, even if you are not feeling sick, stay home when not working as much as possible and practice social distancing.**

What kind of protection does a “mask” provide?

Masks are used to form a physical barrier that can help prevent respiratory secretions from one person spreading to another person. A “face mask” is a loose-fitting, disposable device that creates a physical barrier between the mouth and nose of the wearer and the immediate environment. By blocking respiratory secretions, face masks help prevent the wearer from contaminating others. Masks also prevent us from touching our nose and mouth. In order to be effective, the mask must cover the nose and mouth.

Who should wear a mask?

- Persons who are ill, with active respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, should wear a face mask or surgical mask to protect others.
- Health care professionals who are treating patients should wear a mask. Ideally, both the patient who is ill and the healthcare professional should wear masks.
- The “N95 respirator” is a specific designation for a tight-fitting mask that covers an individual’s mouth and nose. These are used in medical care settings when providers are performing aerosolized procedures such as intubation and cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and require fit testing to ensure they are the right size.
- Presently, the CDC does not recommend the general public wear N95 respirators to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.

If you have symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat), stay home, contact your supervisor and be guided accordingly. If symptoms are mild, you do not need to seek medical care. If you are a member of a higher risk group or your symptoms are severe, such as difficulty breathing, contact/call your primary care provider (PCP). Many providers have a virtual care platform, telehealth or telemedicine, so that a patient can meet with a provider by video or telephone. Avoid contact with others, and if sick and you need to leave your home, put on a face mask. In about 80% of cases, symptoms resolve by themselves with supportive care (including rest, fluids, and taking fever reducing medications such as Tylenol).

Additional information available at <https://preparedness.columbia.edu/>