



## Workplace COVID-19 Risk Level and Selection of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The risks from SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), for workers depends on how extensively the virus spreads between people; the severity of resulting illness; pre-existing medical conditions workers may have; and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus and the relative success of these measures.

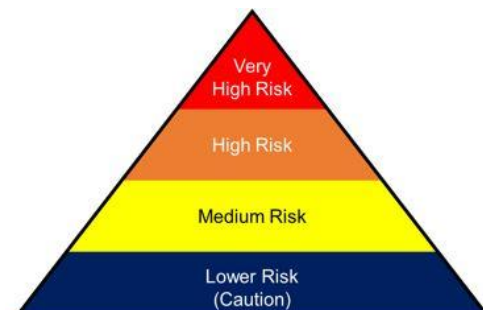
### Classifying Risk of Worker Exposure to SARS-CoV-2

Worker risk of occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 during a pandemic may depend in part on the industry type and the need for contact within 6 feet of people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2. Other factors, such as conditions in communities where employees live and work, their activities outside of work (including travel to COVID-19-affected areas), and individual health conditions, may also affect workers' risk of getting COVID-19 and/or developing complications from the illness.

OSHA has divided job tasks into four risk exposure levels: very high, high, medium, and lower risk, as shown in the occupational risk pyramid, below. The four exposure risk levels represent the probable distribution of risk. Most American workers will likely fall in the lower exposure risk (caution) or medium exposure risk levels.

To help employers determine appropriate precautions, Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) has adopted the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) Risk Levels](#) to characterize job tasks into the four risk exposure levels consisting of very high, high, medium, and lower risk.

**“PPE should not take the place of other prevention strategies such as distancing, proper hygiene, and regular disinfection practices.”**



### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

While engineering and administrative controls are considered more effective in minimizing exposure to SARS-CoV-2, PPE may also be needed to prevent certain exposures. While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other prevention strategies.

Examples of PPE include: gloves, goggles, face shields, face masks, and respiratory protection, when appropriate. During an outbreak of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, recommendations for PPE specific to occupations or job tasks may change depending on geographic location, updated risk assessments for workers, and information on PPE effectiveness in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Employers should check the [OSHA](#) and [CDC](#) websites regularly for updates about recommended PPE.

All types of PPE must be:

- Selected based upon the hazard to the worker.
- Properly fitted and periodically refitted, as applicable (e.g., respirators).
- Consistently and properly worn when required.
- Regularly inspected, maintained, and replaced, as necessary.
- Properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment.

Employers are obligated to provide their workers with PPE needed to keep them safe while performing their job tasks. The types of PPE required during a COVID-19 outbreak will be based on the risk of being infected with SARS-CoV-2 while working and job tasks that may lead to exposure.

The most important precautions we can all take to limit the spread of the virus include:

- Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after spending time in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover coughs and sneezes. Throw used tissues in the trash immediately.
- Continue to follow social distancing and maintain 6 feet of separation between yourself and others.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment Risk Level Table Summary

Risk Level	Risk Description	Job Role	PPE/Mask
<b>Very High</b>	Jobs with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical or laboratory procedures.	-Healthcare personnel performing aerosol-generating procedures on known or suspected COVID-19 patients.	-Respirator (N-95) -Disposable gown -Disposable gloves -Chemical goggles or safety glasses -Face shield
<b>High</b>	Jobs with high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19. Non-aerosol generating procedures performed.	-Student Health Services or laboratory personnel collecting / handling specimens from known or suspected COVID-19 patients -Athletic Trainers -Campus Police Officers -College of Health Sciences -Housing and Residence Life -Professional Personnel for quarantine / isolation residence hall -Counseling and Psychological Services -Select Facilities Maintenance and Custodial Personnel for COVID-19 response -EHS Office	-Respirator (N-95) or disposable medical mask -Disposable gown -Disposable gloves -Chemical goggles or safety glasses - Face shield
<b>Medium</b>	Jobs include those that require frequent and/or **close contact with individuals who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2, but who are not known or suspected COVID-19 patients. In areas where there is ongoing community transmission,	-Exchange locations (e.g. cashiers, retail) -Information / Support Services (front desk areas) -Food Services	-Disposable medical or cloth mask -Disposable gloves -Splash barrier or face shield

	employees in this category may have contact with the general public (e.g., schools, high population-density work environments, some high-volume retail settings).	-Transportation	-Disposable medical or cloth mask -Safety glasses or face shield -Disposable gloves -Disposable gown (optional) -Vehicle splash barrier
		-Classroom or Laboratory (close contact)	-Disposable medical or cloth mask -Disposable gloves -Safety glasses or face shield
		-Athletics personnel (close contact)	-Disposable medical or cloth mask -Disposable gloves -Safety glasses or face shield
<b>Low risk (Caution)</b>	Jobs that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 nor frequent close contact with the general public.  Employees in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public or coworkers.	-Custodial and Maintenance Personnel -Office Personnel -Laboratory Personnel -Classroom Personnel -IT Personnel -Mail Services -Other identified low risk groups	-Disposable medical or cloth mask* -Additional PPE is not recommended for employees in this group. Employees should continue to use PPE, if any, that they would ordinarily use for other job tasks.