

## **COVID-19 RESPONSE: DEFENCE FORCES GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF PPE**

### **References**

- A. *COVID-19 Response: Defence Forces Operational Cleaning Protocol*, issued by DJ3/5 on 20 MAR 2020.
- B. *Current recommendations for the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the management of suspected or confirmed COVID-19*, issued by the HSE/HSPC.

1. The DF currently has two categories of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) i.e. DF personal issue reusable (soft ordnance, wet gear and CBRN issue) PPE and single-use disposable PPE. This document provides guidance to all DF members on the appropriate wearing of PPE while on duty. This document will be used in tandem with Ref A. (COVID-19 RESPONSE: DEFENCE FORCES OPERATIONAL CLEANING PROTOCOL) and aligns specific dress categories appropriately.

2. In all cases the hierarchy of controls (elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administration controls and PPE) will be employed by all DF members on operational activity IOT reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. PPE is the last line of defence for exposure to this contagion. In the context of risk of respiratory and contact infection, PPE adds an extra layer of protection to complement scrupulous attention to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette and environmental hygiene.

3. In all their actions, DF personnel should implement standard precautions for infection prevention and control at all times (as per Ref B).

- a. Maintain a physical distance of at least 1 metre but ideally 2 metres from other individuals.
- b. Clean your hands regularly by washing in the recommended manner with hot water and soap for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand cleaning substitute.
- c. Avoid touching your face, especially the nose, eyes and mouth.
- d. Promote respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, which involves covering mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and/or sneezing. Discard the used tissue into a waste bin, then clean your hands as above. Should you not have a tissue available, cough into the crook of your elbow and if necessary then clean your hands as above.

4. PPE levels for activities will be noted and communicated in the activity risk assessment. A demonstration of the correct and appropriate wearing and use of PPE will be demonstrated prior to any DF undertaking. The activity IC will inform all personnel of the appropriate donning and doffing times for PPE. The safe disposal mechanisms for PPE will also be clearly outlined.

5. As our COVID-19 operations evolve, JTFHQ will advise tasked entities accordingly on PPE CAT, in line with this guidance document and taking into account the necessary SME (e.g. Medical and H&S) advice. However it remains the prerogative of the tasked formation to decide on the specific PPE CAT, based on local risk assessments. To complement this guidance document, a Defence Forces Risk Advisory Notice on the compilation of operational risk





assessments (as per H&S GRO 05/2015 and associated SOPs) will be circulated under separate cover.

6. Please note that members of the DF who do NOT present any symptoms of COVID-19 and have NOT been in close contact with an infected individual are classed as low risk.

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**List of Annexes**

- A. PPE activity dress categories.
- B. Disposal and cleaning of PPE.
- C. PPE Quick Reference Tac-Aide.



## PPE ACTIVITY DRESS CATEGORIES

PPE Dress CAT	Activities	PPE required
<b>0</b>	Routine administrative barrack/base tasks. Travelling in vehicles with low risk persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No PPE worn</li> </ul>
<b>1A</b>	Activities where distancing remains greater than 2 metres from individuals but possible contact to contaminated surfaces may occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-pair of nitrile gloves</li> </ul>
<b>1B</b>	N/A for Operational Activities	
<b>2</b>	Activities where distancing may be less than 2 meters from infected individuals and where contact to contaminated surfaces may occur.  Operating in close quarters with a suspected/confirmed case and there is a risk of touching contaminated surfaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nitrile gloves</li> <li>• Surgical facemask or FFP<sup>1</sup>2 facemask</li> <li>• Disposable goggles (issued tactical goggles as contingency)</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	Activities involving persons suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19.  Deliberately touching a confirmed/suspected case.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-pair of nitrile gloves (double if handling contaminated items)</li> <li>• Surgical facemask or FFP2 facemask</li> <li>• Disposable goggles<sup>2</sup> (issued tactical goggles as contingency)</li> <li>• Disposable chemical suit or apron (issued rain-gear or CBRN suit as contingency<sup>3</sup>)</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	Crowd Riot Control (CRC) involving persons suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-pair of nitrile gloves</li> <li>• Surgical facemask or FFP2 facemask &amp; goggles or FM12 respirator</li> <li>• Disposable chemical suit or apron (issued rain-gear or CBRN suit as contingency)</li> <li>• CRC PPE</li> </ul>

*\*All reusable PPE will be cleaned after use as per Annex B.*

*\*FFP2 has a breakthrough time of 8 Hours, meaning it can be effectively worn for 8 hours.*

<sup>1</sup> Filtering face piece (FFP) 2 of EN Standard 149:2001 and roughly equivalent to the US N95 respirator.

<sup>2</sup> With due regard to available stocks, the EN 1663 standard is to be applied, where possible.

<sup>3</sup> Reusable PPE is to be carefully managed and cleaned. The 'cleaning by time' technique is to be implemented, using the DTG of last use/clean to select PPE for future details.





## **DISPOSAL AND CLEANING OF PPE**

### **1. Destruction of Soiled PPE**

No special precautions are required when disposing of waste potentially contaminated with Coronavirus. Routine protocols apply - gloves should be worn when handling the waste, personnel should carry out hand-washing before and after using the gloves. There is NO need to wear masks or other PPE, as these would only be required to protect from infected people coughing up droplets.

### **2. Cleaning of Reusable PPE**

Disinfectant cleaning wipes or a liquid bleach cleaning solution are to be used only. Sodium Hypochlorite is the active cleaning agent in bleach. It is recommended that a 0.5% solution (by volume) of Sodium Hypochlorite in water be utilised. This is to be mixed with care in-location as required and contact with exposed skin avoided.

### **3. Sodium Hypochlorite**

1L of commercial bleach (e.g. Domestos) requires dilution in 9L of water i.e. a 1:9 ratio. Stocks of Sodium Hypochlorite and commercial bleach are likely to be limited and therefore should not be wasted. As a precautionary measure, cleaning solutions should NOT directly contact the skin.

### **4. Cleaning Solution (PPE When Mixing Cleaning Solution)**

Bleach is a common household cleaning agent and is not hazardous when handled with care. As a precautionary measure, goggles and gloves are to be worn during mixing, and mixing is to occur as necessary only.

### **5. Cleaning Equipment**

Knapsack sprayer units, cloths and sponges are recommended. Dripping water is to be avoided. Footwear is to be cleaned by dipping the soles into a bucket of cleaning solution.





## PPE QUICK REFERENCE TAC-AIDE

<b>COVID-19 PPE GUIDANCE TAC-AIDE</b>		
<b>PPE DRESS CAT</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>PPE REQUIRED</b>
0	Normal social distancing	No PPE worn
1A	Could touch contaminant	Single-pair of nitrile gloves
2	Less than 2 metres from someone. Contaminated surfaces may occur.	Double-pair of nitrile gloves Surgical facemask or FFP2 facemask Disposable goggles (issued tactical goggles as contingency)
3	Suspected or confirmed COVID-19.	Gloves Surgical facemask or FFP2 facemask Goggles Wetsuit / OAs
4	Crowd Riot Control (CRC) COVID-19	Single-pair of nitrile gloves Surgical facemask or FFP2 facemask & goggles or respirator CBRN Suit/Overalls CRC PPE

