

Safe Systems of Work

Where possible, all contact with people should be carried out while maintaining social distancing measures – a distance of at least 2 meters (6 feet). Where this is not possible, other methods should be applied, using measures such as physical barriers and alternative working practices and, as a final measure, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) based on risk assessment, where other safe working systems alone may not be feasible or may be insufficient to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Hygiene measures

The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning, personal hygiene and regular hand hygiene. An increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces and equipment, using standard household cleaning and disinfection products, is recommended.

After contact with any member of the public, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or the minimum 2-meter social distancing was maintained.

Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.

There are no additional precautions to be taken in relation to cleaning your clothing or uniform other than what is usual practice.

What to do if you are required to come into close contact with someone as part of your first aid duties

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Where it is not possible to maintain a 2 metre or more distance away from an individual, disposable gloves and a disposable plastic apron are recommended. Disposable gloves should be worn if physical contact is likely to be made with potentially contaminated areas or items.

The use of a fluid repellent surgical face mask (FRSM / Type IIR) is recommended and additional use of disposable eye protection (such as face visor or goggles) should be risk assessed when there is an anticipated risk of contamination with splashes, droplets of blood or body fluids.

When using a fluid repellent surgical face mask, you should mould the metal strap of the mask over the bridge of the nose and make sure the mask fits snugly under the chin, around or across any facial hair if present.

Clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol sanitiser before putting on and after taking off PPE. In all circumstances where some form of PPE is used, the safe removal of the PPE is a critical consideration to avoid self-contamination. Use and dispose of all PPE according to the instructions and training provided by your employer or organisation.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

If you are required to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), you should conduct a risk assessment and adopt appropriate precautions for infection control. In adults, it is recommended that you do not perform rescue breaths or mouth-to-mouth ventilation; perform chest compressions only. Compression-only CPR may be as effective as combined ventilation and compression in the first few minutes after non-asphyxial arrest (cardiac arrest not due to lack of oxygen).

Cardiac arrest in children is more likely to be caused by a respiratory problem (asphyxial arrest), therefore chest compressions alone are unlikely to be effective.

If a decision is made to perform mouth-to-mouth ventilation in asphyxial arrest, use a resuscitation face shield where available.

Should you have given mouth-to-mouth ventilation there are no additional actions to be taken other than to monitor yourself for symptoms of possible COVID-19 over the following 14 days. Should you develop such symptoms you should follow the advice on what to do on the NHS website.

Providing assistance to unwell individuals

If you need to provide assistance to an individual who is symptomatic and may have COVID-19 (that is any individual with a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature), wherever possible, place the person in a place away from others. If there is no physically separate room, ask others who are not involved in providing assistance to stay at least 2 metres away from the individual. If barriers or screens are available, these may be used.

Cleaning the area where assistance was provided

Cleaning will depend on where assistance was provided. It should follow the advice for cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned in the usual way. However, all surfaces that a symptomatic individual has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected.

If there has been a blood or body-fluid spill

Keep people away from the area. Use a spill-kit if available, using the PPE in the kit or PPE provided by your employer/organisation and following the instructions provided with the spill-kit. If no spill-kit is available, place paper towels/roll onto the spill, and seek further advice from emergency services when they arrive.

Contacts of the person you have assisted

Advise anyone who had close contact with the individual that if they go on to develop symptoms of COVID-19 (continuous cough, fever), they should follow the advice on what to do on the NHS website.

What to do if you become unwell

If you have already been given specific advice from your employer about who to call if you become unwell, follow that advice.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you will need to stay at home for 7 days. Refer to the advice on the NHS website and the Stay at home guidance.
