



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

COVID-19

Operational Bulletin 2020 - 009

C19 PPE/RPE requirements

Level of PPE and RPE whilst dealing with suspected or confirmed cases of Covid19 at incidents.

References:

[NFCC Covid-19-PPE guidance firefighters and front line staff](#)

[Public health England- Guidance for First Responders COVID 19](#)

1. BACKGROUND

The following document provides guidance for SWFRS personnel on the level of PPE/RPE required when attending incidents, undertaking CS duties and participating in Station-based activities. **It must be noted supplies of RPE/PPE are limited throughout the Service and across the country and we have a responsibility to use the high standard of PPE/RPE we have appropriately.**

2. PROCEDURES TO BE ADOPTED

Below we have categorised PPE measures according to incident or activity to assist personnel. **However, regardless of incident/activity, the following must be observed at all times:**

- Personnel must ensure prior to donning PPE/RPE their hands and wrists are free from rings, jewellery and watches in readiness for the process of decontamination. This will enable full decontamination of hands and wrists following any incident.
- The OIC must be mindful of wherever reasonably practicable to maintain 2m distancing to safeguard those personnel attending the incident.
- All personnel are to ensure they maintain a spare clean change of working rig in their Station lockers to enable full decontamination following any incident.

3. Levels of PPE/RPE to be adopted at incidents

Incidents involving assisting WAST with Bariatric Patient Movement

- Nitrile gloves (double gloved)
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or fluid resistant surgical mask.
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Tyvek fluid resistant disposable suit worn over lightweight Red RTC/Wildfire PPE.

- In the absence of Tyvek suits being available crews MUST wear either red wildfire/RTC PPE with disposable apron or gold firefighting PPE.
- To further protect crews and if the patient will tolerate it a fluid resistant mask should be used on the patient to limit any spread of the virus.

Assisting WAST: Cardiac Arrest - with specific task of performing CPR

- Nitrile gloves (double gloved)
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or FFP3 disposable mask.
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Tyvek fluid resistant disposable suit worn over lightweight Red RTC/Wildfire PPE or full structural firefighting kit (gold kit).

The OIC must limit exposure of personnel by using limited crew numbers to carryout BLS.

Before the commencement of chest compressions and the casualty's airway being secured with an Igel and BVM it would be beneficial to fit the patient with a fluid resistant surgical face mask. This will reduce the risk of the release of airborne particles. Compressions and fitting of the AED can then take place.

When appropriate, compressions can stop and an Igel can then be fitted and airway secured. Full CPR can then commence.

Attendance at any operational incident when the casualty goes into cardiac arrest and requires BLS/CPR

- Nitrile gloves (double gloved).
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or FFP3 disposable mask.
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Tyvek fluid resistant disposable suit worn over lightweight Red RTC/Wildfire PPE or full Structural firefighting kit (gold kit).

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When appropriate, compressions can stop and an Igel can then be fitted and airway secured. Full CPR can then commence.

Attendance at RTCs

Casualty carers:

- Red RTC/Wildfire PPE with plastic disposable apron or full firefighting kit.
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or FFP3 disposable mask.*
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Nitrile gloves (double gloved)
- To further protect crews and if the patient will tolerate, it a fluid resistant mask should be used on the patient to limit any spread of the virus.

All personnel within 2 metres of the casualty:

- Red RTC/Wildfire PPE or full firefighting kit.
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or FFP3 disposable mask.*
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Nitrile gloves under firefighting gloves.

*FFP3 disposable masks can be used during operations at RTC incidents to allow crews to use their visors as an additional level of eye protection along with their Bolle Tracker safety glasses.

Incidents involving the support of WAST for the purpose of body recovery

- Nitrile gloves (double gloved)
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or fluid resistant surgical mask.
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Lightweight Red RTC/Wildfire PPE with apron or Tyvek fluid resistant suit.

Incidents involving specialist rescue/rope rescue

SWFRS attend incidents that will require our specialist teams to access and rescue casualties from precarious positions. This involves close contact with casualties. Maintaining correct levels of PPE/RPE will be essential during these rescues.

- Nitrile gloves under rope rescue gloves.
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator or FFP3 disposable mask.**
- Bolle Tracker personal issue safety glasses.
- Lightweight red RTC/Wildfire PPE.
- To further protect crews and if the patient will tolerate it a fluid resistant mask should be used on the patient to limit any spread of the virus.

** in this situation the minimum requirement for RPE would be a fluid resistant surgical mask. Due to the practicality of maintaining the fitment of the RPE it is deemed more suitable to use either a personal respirator or an FFP3 disposable mask.

Water related incidents

SWFRS specialist crews will attend water related incidents.

It is recognised that the wearing of RPE at water related incidents can offer a number of challenges. The below guidance is for out of water operations, bank based and in boat. This level of PPE will compliment your water team type PPE. When dealing with casualties/body recovery all personnel within 2 metres of the casualty MUST, when reasonably practicable, don the following level of PPE/RPE:-

- Nitrile gloves worn under water gloves
- Fluid resistant surgical mask or FFP3 disposable mask (choice of either due to practicality of use)
- Bolle Tracker personal issue eye protection.
- To further protect crews and if the patient will tolerate it a fluid resistant mask should be used on the patient to limit any spread of the virus.

If crews need to administer CPR then wearing a drysuit will negate the need to wear a Tyvek fluid resistant suit.

Wildfire incidents

It is recognised that personnel can come into contact with members of the public whilst attending wildfire incidents. Therefore the following MUST be observed:

- Wildfire PPE
- Bolle tracker personal issue glasses
- Sundstrom personal issue respirator***
- Firefighting gloves.

*** due to the high level of protection the personal issue respirator offers there is no requirement to use FFP3 disposable masks at these incidents.

4. Non incident related PPE/RPE requirements

Doorstep delivery

- Maintain a 2 metre distance and remain outside property.
- Nitrile gloves

If entering property

- Wear fluid resistant surgical mask.
- Nitrile gloves.
- Bolle Tracker personal issue glasses.
- Maintain distance of 2 metres whenever possible.
- If 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained request occupant wears a fluid resistant surgical mask.

Day to day duties whilst on Station, travelling in the appliance and carrying out risk visits.

SWFRS are maintaining the 2 metre social distancing rule when reasonably practicable. The Service is taking all reasonable measures to ensure the Health and Safety of its employees.

Whilst carrying out day to day tasks on Station there is no requirement to wear additional PPE or RPE.

Whilst travelling in the fire appliance to and from incidents there is no requirement to wear any additional PPE or RPE other than that worn to deal with the incident you're attending.

If you have been contaminated at the incident and cannot fully decontaminate at scene suitable PPE/RPE should be worn while returning to Station prior to decontamination.

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