Appendix D
Personal Protective Equipment Guidelines
COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment Guidance

This document is intended to provide guidance on SFU’s recommendations for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and is consistent with direction provided by the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC.

PPE is equipment worn by workers to minimize exposure to specific hazards. Examples of PPE include respirators, gloves, and eye and face protection. PPE is generally considered the last line of defense against hazards in the workplace, as outlined in the hierarchy of controls below. PPE does not reduce the hazard itself nor does it guarantee permanent or total protection.

Other than the PPE normally worn by employees (e.g., gloves and safety glasses worn in labs), additional equipment is not recommended to protect against COVID-19 in most situations.

Hierarchy of controls

1. **Elimination or Substitution**: This involves removing the risk of exposure entirely from the workplace. This could involve postponing, re-organizing, or planning work in such a way that workers are not exposed to any risk. Having workers work remotely would be an example of eliminating the risk from the workplace.

2. **Engineering controls**: These are physical changes in the workplace, such as installing plexiglass barriers.

3. **Administrative controls**: This involves altering work practices to minimize exposure, such as minimizing the numbers of workers in a space, staggering work shifts, and holding meetings via video-conferencing.

4. **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**: This last form of protection should only be considered after careful consideration of the previous control measures. Some workplaces have specific requirements for PPE, such as in health care settings and labs. Please refer to [SFU’s PPE in the Laboratory document](#) for guidance on required PPE.
Respirators and Masks

N95 respirators and medical masks are not recommended for SFU employees with the exception of first aid and health care providers who may be required to provide care to ill community members. These items are in short supply across the province and need to be prioritized for health care workers.

The use of non-medical or homemade masks can help in containing your own droplets and protecting others but it will not protect you from COVID-19. In general, these masks are not considered PPE and are not required in the workplace or laboratory. However, the use of non-medical masks should be considered in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained and where the implementation of other control measures is not feasible.

Some employees may choose to wear non-medical or cloth masks at work. Although not mandatory, the use of these masks is a matter of personal choice and should be respected. Employees are reminded that cloth masks must be washed before they are reused and should be replaced when wet, soiled or damaged. Additional information on home-made masks is provided by the BC CDC at:

http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks
Gloves
Gloves are not recommended for most SFU employees to protect against COVID-19. Other measures, such as physical distancing and good hygiene practices, are more effective in preventing the risk of transmission. Gloves should continue to be worn by health care and first aid providers and by researchers handling hazardous materials in the lab. Gloves are also recommended when cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects or surfaces.

When required, gloves should be used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and good hygiene practices. This includes:

- Choosing the proper gloves for the chemicals or other materials you are handling.
- Proper donning and doffing gloves to minimize contamination. If you are wearing a mask, put your gloves on last, and take them off first when you are finished. Wash your hands before and after wearing gloves.
- Changing gloves after there is a tear, damage, or puncture.
- Not using hand sanitizer on gloves.
- Gloves should not be worn through the hallways in lab areas to prevent the risk of contaminating surfaces with hazardous materials.

Eye and Face Protection
Eye protection, through safety glasses or goggles, and face shields are only recommended for health care workers and first aid providers where there is the potential for any spraying or splattering of blood or other bodily fluids. Faculty, staff and students working in labs should continue to wear the necessary PPE to protect against the hazardous materials in use. Safety glasses and goggles should not be shared between people. If specialized PPE must be shared (e.g., face shields, acid aprons, etc.), it must be disinfected before and after use.

Procurement of PPE
Departments are responsible for purchasing PPE supplies through the regular procurement channels (i.e., through Science Stores). Central Stores will maintain a small inventory of PPE products for purchase but this supply will be prioritized for essential service providers.

Additional Resources
BC CDC Guidance on Masks
Government of Canada Non Medical Masks and Face Coverings
WorkSafeBC Returning to Safe Operation FAQs