



# Respiratory Illness PPE Guidance

## June 2022

### General Notes

- COVID restrictions have been reduced nationally
- There may be future waves of COVID with differing transmissibility and severity of disease
- There will likely be other respiratory pandemics / epidemics eg a virulent influenza, and require similar PPE, therefore this guidance is no longer specific to COVID but all respiratory illnesses.

### Preventing respiratory disease transmission

- The main principles to prevent respiratory disease transmission are:
  - Good ventilation and social distancing
  - Masks and eye protection when social distancing cannot be maintained
  - Good hand hygiene both using gloves and decontaminating
  - Vaccination against that disease
  - Initial screening of casualties about their current disease status / symptoms

### PPE risks in the Mountain Rescue Environment

- It is recognised in the mountain rescue environment that the weather may render the wearing of certain items of PPE of a greater risk to the individual than the risk of contracting a respiratory illness e.g.
  - Masks in heavy rain or high winds impairing breathing / safe movement
  - Eye protection misting impairing vision
  - Waterproofs causing heat exhaustion

### Personal Risk Tolerance

- The tolerance of personal risk will vary between individuals and vary at different times for the same individual e.g.
  - Individual at increased risk due to their own medical conditions / age etc
  - Individual who strongly wishes to avoid the disease due to complications of the disease
  - Individual with close contact to vulnerable people and wanting to avoid onward transmission
  - Individual who has made travel / other plans who needs to remain disease free due to travel restrictions / requirements (e.g. needing to be PCR negative)



### Team member illness / testing

- Team members who are acutely unwell with symptoms of a respiratory illness should come off call until their symptoms resolve.
- If lateral flow tests for the disease are available then these can be used to aid decision making – remember if LFTs only detect COVID, if you are negative and you are unwell it is good practice to remain away from the team for own your personal health (significant exertion whilst unwell) as well as for team mates as other respiratory illnesses can have significant impact on another person or their contacts

### Risk determination of the situation

- This version of the guidance tries to allow the individual / team to make a dynamic risk assessment of the situation in terms of the following areas of risk:
  - Personal risk – risk to the individual or their contacts
  - External Risk – both in terms of the disease and the environment
  - Casualty Risk – both in terms of symptoms and treatments
- As with most areas in life there are no black and white cut off points for low / moderate or high-risk situations.
- Following this a decision as a team member, fell party, vehicle occupant or team can be made whether to use PPE in that situation.
- Teams may wish to have predetermined plans for certain situations – eg masks for all casualty and casualty carers interaction regardless of risk assessment and this should be decided within teams
- If a team member feels their personal risk is higher than their team mates then they should feel comfortable to wear additional PPE and for others to respect this and / or wear additional PPE too.



## Risk Determination

