



**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** AUGUST 10, 2020  
**TO:** ALL SF HEALTH CARE FACILITIES & PERSONNEL  
**FROM:** INFORMATION & GUIDANCE BRANCH  
**RE:** EYE PROTECTION

---

Recently, the CDC updated their [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel](#) adding the following language regarding eye protection:

Section titled: **Implement Universal Use of Personal Protective Equipment**

*HCP working in facilities located in areas with moderate to substantial community transmission are more likely to encounter asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic patients with SARS-CoV-2 infection. If SARS-CoV-2 infection is not suspected in a patient presenting for care (based on symptom and exposure history), HCP should follow [Standard Precautions](#) (and [Transmission-Based Precautions](#) if required based on the suspected diagnosis).*

*They should also: Wear eye protection in addition to their facemask to ensure the eyes, nose, and mouth are all protected from exposure to respiratory secretions during patient care encounters.*

On July 15, 2020, CDC added the note that protective eyewear (e.g., safety glasses, trauma glasses) with gaps between glasses and the face “likely do not protect eyes from all splashes and sprays” and revised its recommendations regarding eye protection for healthcare personnel (HCP).

At present, San Francisco is considered to be an area with moderate to substantial community transmission.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore:

- 1. For aerosol generating procedures (AGPs) as well as procedures where there is the potential for splashes and sprays, eye protection in the form of either face shields [1] or goggles [2] is recommended for all persons in the room.**
- 2. For all other patient contact activities, regardless of distance, eye protection is recommended unless a physical barrier is in place. Eye protection may be in the form of safety glasses [3] or surgical eye shields (also known as trauma glasses) [4]. HCP already wearing a face shield or goggles do NOT need to switch to safety glasses or surgical eye shields.**

Numbers in brackets [] above refer to entries on the eye protection guide attached to this document.



**Additional Considerations for Eyeglass Wearers:**

- Surgical eye shields generally have a bend or flange that allows them to be worn on top of prescription eyewear.
- Eyeglass wearers also have options of over-the-glasses (OTG) safety glasses, face shields, or goggles.
- Finally, eyeglass wearers can opt to purchase their own safety glasses, noting that the standard safety glass lenses have a 3 mm minimum thickness for solid object impact resistance which may not be needed, and side shields, which although required for ANSI compliance, are often treated by opticians as optional because the presence of side shields can impact being able to drive with the safety glasses on.
- Reminder that during AGPs or activities where splash or spray risks are present, eyeglass wearers should be wearing either face shields or goggles.

---

<sup>1</sup> Note regarding “areas with moderate to substantial community transmission”:

At the determination of facility leadership, facilities including but not limited to Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) and Long-Term Care Facilities (LTCF) with:

(a) highly limited and controlled access, and

(b) intensive repeat COVID-19 testing regimens for both patients or clients and staff

may determine themselves to be separate areas for the purpose of this memo. If within their defined area there is not moderate to substantial community transmission, other eye protection requirements may be established by the facility. It is recommended in all cases that eye protection be offered for voluntary use by employees unless the use of such protection would pose risks to either the wearer or patients or clients.



**San Francisco**  
Department of Public Health

# COVID-19 Eye Protection

For Aerosol Generating Procedures (AGPs) and/or activities where there is the risk of splashes or sprays

## 1. Face Shield:



*Healthcare face shield shown, impact resistant industrial Face Shields also acceptable*

## 2. Goggles:



*Flexible surround forms seal against face*

For general patient care activities without splash or spray risks and when AGPs not being performed

## 3. Safety Glasses:



*Rigid, impact resistant plastic*

## 4. Surgical Eye Shield (aka Trauma Glasses):



*Lightweight flexible plastic connected to frame*