

# COVID-19 Notice

Saturday 14 March 2020



Dear colleagues

I appreciate the challenge of regularly adapting to what seems like conflicting advice, but in truth this represents the unique position of new guidance being developed nationally on an almost daily basis. Two important changes have are being circulated today and I would bring your attention to the following:

Firstly, health care workers across the HSCNI who have been inadvertently exposed to suspect or coronavirus patients through a breach of appropriate PPE no longer have to automatically self-isolate and can remain on duty. If they subsequently develop signs of respiratory tract infection they must immediately stay at home for the duration of the illness or 7 days, whichever is longer. Consequently, crews who have already been advised of the need to self-isolate can now report back for duty unless they have already developed respiratory symptoms.

Secondly the levels of PPE have again been updated to state that only the “droplet protection” level of PPE (surgical mask, gloves, apron and visor) is necessary when responding to suspect or confirmed COVID-19 patients; higher level protection involving FFP3 masks and Tyvek suits are now only required in the event of undertaking aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs) which include intubation and related procedures such as manual ventilation, suction and CPR. Nebulisation is not classed as AGP.

Full details of the above can be found in the attachments to this message, but in closing I would like to say thank-you for your continued hard work at this challenging time.

**Yours sincerely,**  
**Nigel Ruddell**  
**Medical Director**