



Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Health  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**

December 21, 2020

**DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

No. 2020 - 0534

**TO: ALL UNDERSECRETARIES AND ASSISTANT SECRETARIES;  
DIRECTORS OF BUREAUS, SERVICES AND CENTERS FOR  
HEALTH DEVELOPMENT; MINISTER OF HEALTH -  
BANGSAMORO AUTONOMOUS REGION IN MUSLIM  
MINDANAO; EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF SPECIALTY  
HOSPITALS AND NATIONAL NUTRITION COUNCIL;  
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE OF  
TRADITIONAL MEDICINE AND ALTERNATIVE HEALTH  
CARE; CHIEFS OF MEDICAL CENTERS, HOSPITALS,  
SANITARIA AND INSTITUTES; PRESIDENT OF THE  
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION;  
DIRECTORS OF PHILIPPINE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL  
SECRETARIAT AND TREATMENT AND REHABILITATION  
CENTERS AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED**

**SUBJECT: Guidance on the Use of Face Shields for COVID-19 Mitigation**

**I. Background**

The Department of Health (DOH) Administrative Order No. 2020-0015 provides for non-pharmaceutical interventions as risk-based public health standards to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 (i.e. the minimum public health standards or "MPHS"). This includes the rational use of personal protective equipment (PPE) -- wearing appropriate face covering such as cloth or surgical masks, do-it-yourself masks, and face shields, depending on the setting and availability of such garment or equipment. Along with other minimum public health standards such as physical distancing, handwashing, quarantine/isolation measures, and regular disinfection, the rational use of PPE can contribute to the control of COVID-19 cases.

On April 1, 2020, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) mandated the wearing of face masks when going out of residences to suppress COVID-19 transmission. While face masks are effective in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, eye protection through the use of face shields, in addition to the use of face masks, is also estimated to reduce infections<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Chu, D.K. MD, Akl, E.A. MD, Duda, S. MSc, Solo, K. MSc, Yaacoub, S. MPH, Schünemann, H.J. MD. (27 June 2020). Physical distancing, face masks, and eye protection to prevent person-to-person transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *The Lancet* 395(10242), pp. 1973-1987. Retrieved from: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31142-9/fulltext)

To prevent and control the anticipated post-holiday surge of COVID-19 cases, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) through the issuance of IATF Resolution No. 88 has expanded its guidelines on mandatory PPEs by requiring the use of face shields in all public areas outside of residence to further curb the spread of COVID-19. This Department Memorandum provides guidance on the use of face shields during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## **II. Guidelines for the use of face shields**

### **A. Individuals in the following settings shall wear full coverage face shields in addition to the face masks to prevent the risk of COVID-19 transmission:**

1. Enclosed (i.e. indoors) public spaces;
2. Schools;
3. Workplaces and business establishments;
4. Food establishments;
5. Malls, public markets and other business establishments;
6. Public transport and terminals;
7. Places of worship; and
8. Other public spaces wherein one (1) meter physical distancing is not possible **AND** there is a gathering of more than 10 individuals at the same venue at the same time.

### **B. The following individuals shall be exempted from wearing face shields:**

1. Neonates and children below two years old<sup>2,3</sup>.
2. Individuals wearing goggles or other barriers for eye protection in their current tasks or line of work.
3. Individuals who are unable to remove face shields on their own -- including those who are incapacitated, unconscious or with medical conditions.
4. Individuals engaging in any form of health-enhancing physical activity or sports *provided* that a physical distancing of two (2) meters in open spaces/outdoor facilities and three (3) meters in enclosed spaces/indoor facilities is observed. Face shields may be removed during the conduct of the activity, but must be worn before and after the activity.
5. Individuals whose safety or ability to work would be seriously and adversely affected by visual or respiratory impairment due to use of a face shield.
6. Individuals engaged in strenuous activities/work (ex. construction, logistics), fine workmanship (ex. seamstresses), operation of transportation vehicles (i.e. when driving), and active transport. Face shields must be worn before and after the exempted work, task, or activity.
7. Passengers of motor vehicles wearing helmets with full-face visors are exempted from wearing face shields but must wear face shields before and after transit.
8. Individuals who are eating and drinking in public spaces. Face shields must be worn before and after eating and drinking.

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<sup>2</sup> Philippine Pediatric Society, Philippine Society on Newborn Medicine (2020). Joint Statement on the Use of Face Shield for Newborns During the SARS-COV2 Pandemic.

<sup>3</sup> Center for Disease Control. Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings (2020). Retrieved July 8, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>.

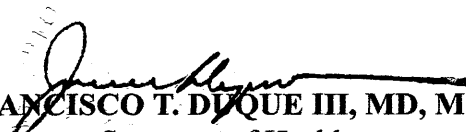
C. Face shields shall meet the following minimum criteria, as adapted from recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) based on the mode of transmission of the current pandemic<sup>4</sup> :

1. Made of clear plastic and provides good visibility;
2. Allows for a snug fit around the head or ears, depending on the type of face shield used;
3. Does not have holes and covers completely the sides, excluding the ears; covers the angle of the jaw; and covers the full length of the face, until the chin;
4. Made of material that can be cleaned or disinfected; or the face shield may be disposable;
5. Regularly cleaned and disinfected; and
6. Preferably fog-resistant, but this is not a requirement.

D. Individuals are reminded of the following when wearing a face shield:

1. The face shield shall always be worn with a face mask. Wearing of face shields shall not be considered as a substitute for wearing face masks. See Annex A for the correct use of face shields.
2. Proper hand-washing and/or hand-sanitizing shall be observed when wearing or removing face masks and face shields. Avoid touching the surface of your face mask and face shield once worn.
3. Face shields shall be always inspected for holes or scratches which would render it unusable or risky to use before donning.
4. The face shield shall cover the entire face at all times when worn. The face shield must not be tilted or lifted away from the face, and should not rest above the head.

Strict compliance and dissemination to all concerned is requested.

  
**FRANCISCO T. DUQUE III, MD, MSc**  
Secretary of Health

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<sup>4</sup> World Health Organization. Personal protective equipment for use in a filovirus disease outbreak Rapid advice guideline (2016) <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/251426/9789241549721-eng.pdf?sequence=1&ua=1>

## Annex A. How to Use Face Shields Correctly



### Correct Use

The face shield covers the whole face, is snugly fit on the sides of the head, and is worn with a facemask.

### Incorrect Use

The face shield does not cover the whole face.

### Incorrect Use

The face shield is resting on top of the head and is not properly worn.