

# COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control and Cohorting in Long-term Care

## REFERENCE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH SUPPORT

Local and state public health partners are essential to ensuring that infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, including cohorting, are implemented in long-term care (LTC) facilities. This reference outlines essential steps to consider when providing onsite and/or remote support of LTC facilities as they work to prevent entry of COVID-19, respond to a single case, or react to outcomes of facility-wide testing.

## IPC Assessment and Action

### Review critical IPC domains

- Administrative
- Surveillance
- Education
- Hand hygiene
- Transmission-based Precautions
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection
- Cleaning and disinfection of equipment
- Transferring residents

### Give the COVID-19 ICAR Action Plan to the facility for their ongoing use

- The critical IPC domains above are included in the COVID-19 Infection Control Assessment and Response Program (ICAR) Action Plan. Columns are included for the facility to identify the person responsible, due date, date complete, and comments.
- Give the Action Plan to the facility to use as a living document. They should be using this Action Plan every day to assure that all elements are in place.
- Links to Microsoft Word and PDF versions of the Action Plan are provided under “Resources,” below.

## Key Points for COVID-19 Units

### Why cohort?

- Separation of positive residents, referred to as “cohorting,” can decrease risk of transmission to negative residents.
- Cohorting allows dedicated staff to work only in the COVID-19-positive area, so they are unlikely to carry the virus from positive to negative residents.
- Optimized universal PPE use can be implemented. This includes continuous wearing of mask, eye protection, and gown. Staff should change gloves between residents, with hand hygiene at each glove change. Staff should change gowns if soiled.

### Use a floor plan document (e.g., exit route plan) to plan the physical COVID-19 Unit layout.

- Pick a wing or location.
- Dedicate staff to this unit.
- Post signage prominently at the point of entry to the COVID-19 unit. Consider using [MDH: Enhanced Respiratory Precautions \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ppepresign.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ppepresign.pdf).

### Donning and Doffing Stations for PPE.

- Establish clear donning and doffing locations.
- Designate clean and dirty (contaminated) areas. Consider marking these areas with tape on the floor.
- Establish the traffic flow, so clean areas stays clean.
- **Donning station:** Shelving with gowns, gloves, alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR), extra masks, and eye protection.
- **Doffing station:** Large waste baskets for gowns, ABHR.
- Prominently post a poster with instructions in both areas, for reference while donning and doffing. Consider the middle poster (11x17, with instructions on front) at this link: [CDC: Using Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html).

**Establish a break area for staff, including a place and process for removing and keeping PPE.** Ensure that the break area has sufficient space for social distancing, or limit the number of staff who can be present at any time. Create a location with ABHR for safe donning and doffing of PPE when on break.

**Manage PPE.** Count PPE supplies every day; use the CDC PPE Burn Rate Calculator; and contact your Health Care Coalition for PPE, if down to a 0–3-day supply.

## Resources

[MDH: COVID-19 Action Plan for Congregate Settings \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/icpaction.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/icpaction.pdf>)

[MDH: COVID-19 Action Plan for Congregate Settings \(Word\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/icpaction.docx)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/icpaction.docx>)

[CDC: COVID Guidance for LTC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)

[MDH: Long-term Care: Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ltc.html)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ltc.html>)

[MDH: COVID-19 Toolkit Information for Long-term Care Facilities](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ltctoolkit.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/ltctoolkit.pdf>)

[CDC: Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\) Burn Rate Calculator](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/burn-calculator.html)  
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/burn-calculator.html>)



Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](http://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975

Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.

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