



Captain Dennis Geary
Commander

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Lieutenant Sean Healy
Sergeant Daniel Valente

PPE Levels of Usage

The Coronavirus Disease-19 (COVID 19) is an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. The infection is spread from one person to others via respiratory droplets, often produced during coughing and sneezing, and generally capable of spreading person to person within six feet.

Recently the question has arisen in regards to officers donning their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at police calls for service, and the re-use of their PPE and/or replacement of the Scott Safety Air Purifying Canisters. At this time, the policy for officers is that there is no need to utilize their department issued CBRNE PPE, particularly on routine calls for service. A protective N95 mask will provide adequate protection at this point.

However, should an officer utilize their Scott Full Facepiece with canister, it is important that they realize that these are completely re-usable. The canisters will maintain efficiency for a long period of time, and essentially will continue to provide protection until the point it becomes difficult to breathe with it on. These canisters were developed to provide protection against CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) hazards. To reuse their canister, an officer would simply wipe it down with a disinfectant, recap the canister and re-store the facepiece in the department issued transport bag. There is no need for a new canister throughout a shift.

On medical calls or calls for service where someone has “flu-like” symptoms; officers should be utilizing an N95 mask alone or with a clear faceshield over it. This mask will provide protection against respiratory droplets, and the face shield over it will allow it to be reused. This is in accordance to the CDC guidance and recommendations, suggests limiting the number of reuses to no more than five uses per device to ensure an adequate safety margin. In addition, officers should be using their own N95 mask, and not one worn by another officer.

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>).

The use of the issued Procedural Masks (surgical type tie masks) should be given to those people who are coughing and because of circumstances, stay within 6 feet (social distancing).

Additionally, due to the misunderstanding of the term PPE, and what exactly it entails, the department has adopted different “levels” of PPE, as follows (based on OSHA levels):

Level 1 (Highest protective level):

Situation example: CBRN hazard

Scott Full Facepiece with Scott Safety Air Purifying Canisters
Chemical suit
Rubber boots
Nitrile gloves
Wool glove liner
Rubber chemical glove

Level 2:

Situation example: Extreme risk of respiratory exposure, hazardous air environment

Scott Full Facepiece with Scott Safety Air Purifying Canisters
Department issued uniform
Police boot/footwear
Nitrile gloves

Level 3:

Situation example: Risk of respiratory exposure

N95 mask (with full length faceshield when applicable)
Department issued uniform (with gown when applicable)
Police boot/footwear
Nitrile gloves

Level 4 (Minimal additional protection level):

Situation example: Drug exposure, fentanyl exposure

N95 Mask
Department issued uniform
Police boot/footwear
Nitrile gloves

The department is in the process of acquiring and then distributing disposable full face shields and gowns. The face shields will be issued to each officer and placed in the cruisers. The gowns will be placed in the cruisers.