



**PRIORITISATION AND DISTRIBUTION
OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE
EQUIPMENT IN THE ACT**
*Policy to guide operations during
COVID-19*

Prepared by ACT Health, Community
Services, Canberra Health Services and
Justice and Community Safety
Directorates

27 May 2020

Version 1

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1. INTRODUCTION

On the 16th of March 2020, a public health emergency was declared in the ACT in response to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic across Australia. This public health declaration was the first of its kind in the ACT and was in response to the unprecedented and rapid evolution of the pandemic. The measure was taken to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect the Canberra community.

COVID-19 poses a greater risk to some members of our community, particularly those with existing vulnerabilities. Older people, people with weakened immune systems, people with disability or diagnosed chronic medical conditions and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are some of the cohorts more significantly at risk of COVID-19.

The best defence against the spread of COVID-19 is maintaining good hand hygiene, staying 1.5m apart and remaining at home if unwell. In particular circumstances, personal protective equipment (PPE) can provide a useful defence against the spread of COVID-19.

Through consultation with non-government community and health sector providers, the ACT Government acknowledges the significant impact global supply issues of PPE have had on service delivery. Many providers have adapted, significantly reduced, or in some cases ceased service delivery due to a lack of access to PPE. This has resulting impacts on the ongoing business continuity and sustainability of services, as well as on the clients who are no longer accessing vital services for their health and wellbeing.

The nature of COVID-19, as a highly virile and transmittable virus has resulted in a mass increase in use and demand for PPE and other products of a medical grade. Of particular shortage are face masks, hand sanitiser and gloves. An increase in demand, and subsequent lack of supply, has resulted in a significant increase in the cost of these items, beyond the limits of what non-government sector organisations can afford.

The ACT Government has secured a supply of PPE and this document outlines the policy and end-to-end process to ensure that the supply of PPE is maintained to:

- essential ACT Government health and frontline services, and
- non-government community services organisations.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the Whole of ACT Government management, prioritisation, and distribution of centrally controlled PPE to ensure continuity of supply to essential services.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all requests for PPE managed through the identified central ACT Government supply and distribution point. This includes requests made directly to the manufacturer of the PPE contracted to the ACT Government for the purposes of supply maintenance (for ACT Government) during the COVID-19 emergency.

This policy does not apply to other manufacturers or distributors of PPE as would normally be available for commercial purchase and does not apply to health providers who are able to access PPE through the National Medical stockpile.

This policy will cease to apply at the conclusion of the COVID-19 emergency or at the cessation of the ACT Government contract for manufacture and supply.

4. DEFINITION OF PPE

For the purpose of this policy, PPE¹ includes the following items:

- Respiratory masks and N95/P2 masks*
- Surgical masks
- Disposable Gowns
- Non-sterile nitrile protective gloves
- Transparent Face Shields
- Hand Sanitiser Solution
- Surface Spray
- Hospital-grade disinfectant.

** Clinical requirement only. Level 1 or 2 Surgical Mask should be suitable for all non-clinical requirements.*

5. POLICY STATEMENT

Policy Objectives

- a) Ensure the continuity of essential health, police and emergency services and welfare services is not disrupted by the non-availability of PPE; and
- b) Sustain the essential supply of PPE to other community facing ACT Government agencies or ACT Government funded organisations; and
- c) Provide a mechanism for supply of surplus PPE to non-government organisations in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus; and
- d) Develop a mechanism for the prioritisation of the allocation and distribution of ACT Government manufactured and purchased PPE.

Policy Rationale

The policy and supply network is designed to ensure the continuity of PPE supply to essential health, police, emergency services and welfare services; and that priority is afforded to ACT Government agencies and, where stocks are available, to ensure supply to ACT Government funded entities servicing vulnerable Canberrans.

Risk Statement

That the ACT Government is not able to sustain the existing supply chain to ACT Health and essential frontline services, and that existing market supply of PPE is not sufficient to meet community need to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19.

Organisational risks exist for the ACT Government in the form of reputational damage if the supplied product does not meet relevant standards or community expectations.

¹ PPE for clinical services at CHS is the responsibility of CHS and is not covered by this policy

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ACT Health:

- is responsible for developing and maintaining the policy regarding the use of PPE in the (non-acute) COVID19 environment. This will guide what PPE Non-Government Organisations and Government agencies should require and will be allowed to order through Government.
- ACT Health, in consultation with Canberra Health Services (CHS), Community Services Directorate (CSD) and Justice and Community Safety (including ESA), will maintain a list of those organisations authorised to order PPE through Government processes and share this list with each other.
- will provide support, where required, for warehousing and will lead alternative warehousing solutions for medium-longer term management of PPE storage (i.e. primarily non-acute stores). This will be undertaken in close consultation with CHS, JACS (ESA) and CSD regarding their specific storage requirements.
- will continue to manage the ACT Government's access to, and low volume storage of, the National Medical Stockpile allocation.
- will support both CHS and CSD as required, including through the allocation of additional resources as necessary.

Canberra Health Services

- is responsible for maintaining procurement and supply chain policies and procedures to meet the requirements of those authorised purchasers. CHS will establish a process for triaging order requests, in consultation with ACT Health, JACS (ESA) and CSD, to ensure that high-risk areas are prioritised where there are supply shortages.
- will be the single point of responsibility for purchasing to ensure that the ACT Government is avoiding internal competition and that existing supply chain relationships are utilised to get best value for money. CHS will also have primary responsibility for supply chain management and warehouse management for ACT Government PPE, with support from ACT Health and JACS (ESA) where necessary. Additional resources from other directorates may be required to assist CHS.
- will continue to undertake distribution to existing clients as per their internal policies and procedures and will support distribution processes undertaken by ACT Health, JACS (ESA) and CSD.

Justice and Community Safety Directorate (Emergency Services Agency)

- is responsible for facilitating the purchase and supply (in consultation with CHS) of PPE to CSD for distribution to agencies servicing vulnerable Canberrans
- is responsible for facilitating the purchase and supply of PPE (hand sanitiser and surface spray) to ACT Government agencies
- is responsible for (within policy parameters) facilitating the purchase and supply of PPE (hand sanitiser and surface spray) to primary health care providers (where stock provides for it after other priorities are met).

Community Services Directorate

- is responsible for developing and maintaining the procedures for distribution to Non-Government community and health organisations, in close consultation with JACS (ESA), CHS and ACT Health
- will provide oversight of the PPE stimulus funding in close consultation with ACT Health
- will provide distribution for all other non-Government community and health organisations
- is responsible for the central distribution channel of PPE to non-government services.

7. PPE PRIORITISATION

Due to supply limitations, requests for PPE will be prioritised to allow for the appropriate distribution. The prioritisation of requests for the:

- ACTPS will be undertaken by JACS (ESA) and
- Non-government and health care sectors² will be undertaken by the CSD COVID-19 Contracts, Grants and Stimulus Team (refer to [Attachment B](#)).

The overarching principle is that priority will be given to services where there is a greater risk to community members' health and welfare if the service is otherwise disrupted by the non-availability of PPE.

The overarching principle should be weighted more heavily where a greater risk of transmission exists (i.e. the service provider is in physical contact with the client).

The overarching principle should be weighted less heavily if there are other alternative means of mitigating the risk (such as through ready availability of handwashing).

Prioritisation of requests will be based on nature of services, current health advice and the demonstrated need for PPE outlined by the requesting organisation.

If the ACT Government is unable to adequately meet both the ACTPS and Community Sector needs for PPE, it will prioritise the available PPE. Further advice and agreement will be sought by CHS (in consultation with ACT Health, CSD and JACS (ESA)) to determine how PPE will be prioritised. This could include decreasing the supply of office-based PPE to ensure that front line non-government services are sufficiently equipped.

Commercial entities and businesses are not eligible to access the ACT Government supply unless there are exceptional circumstances. Decisions on access will be made by DDG, CSD.

8. PRIORITISATION OF PPE FOR COMMUNITY SECTOR

Due to supply limitations, requests for PPE will be prioritised to allow for the appropriate distribution. The prioritisation of requests will be undertaken by the COVID-19 Contracts, Grants and Stimulus Team in CSD. Prioritisation of requests will be based on current health advice and the demonstrated need for PPE outlined by the requesting organisation.

Please refer to [Attachment B](#) for details on how PPE can be requested, prioritised and distributed to Non-Government and health care sectors.

9. ACT GOVERNMENT SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION PROCESS

The below table outlines the end-to-end process for the purchase, supply and distribution of ACT Government PPE.

STEPS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AREA
1.	Receive request for PPE and undertake evaluation of	JACS (ESA)

² CSD will consult with the CHECC on the distribution of PPE to the primary health care sector (GPs and allied health professionals). In the first instance, the primary health care sector is expected to secure stock through the commercial market and the Government supply is solely in the event that the commercial market is unable to respond to the sector needs.

	need for PPE (ACTPS)	
2.	Receive request for PPE and undertake evaluation of need for PPE (Non-Government)	CSD
3.	Identify required PPE (including type of PPE, amount, period/frequency)	CSD
4.	Send request for required PPE to JACS (ESA) via ESAhandsanitiser@act.gov.au	CSD
5.	Review request for PPE	JACS (ESA)
6.	Determine appropriate contract (based on price and availability) to purchase PPE, in consultation with CHS	JACS (ESA)
7.	Purchase PPE	JACS (ESA)
8.	Notify CSD of purchase and approximate date for the arrival of PPE	JACS (ESA)
9.	Receive PPE from manufacturer	JACS (ESA)
10.	Notify CSD of arrival of PPE and arrange a time to deliver PPE	JACS (ESA)
11.	Provide CSD with acquittal	JACS (ESA)
12.	Deliver PPE to warehouse	JACS (ESA)
13.	Distribute PPE to prioritised areas	CSD

Refer to [Attachment A](#) for details on how ACT Government manufactured hand sanitiser can be requested and distributed.

Refer to [Attachment B](#) for details on how non-government agencies can request PPE and how that PPE is prioritised for distribution.

10. NON-COMPLIANCE WITH THIS POLICY

Managers and staff are accountable to the COVID-19 Coordinator-General for the fulfilment of their responsibilities under this policy as detailed above.

Failure to comply with the terms of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

11. GLOSSARY

Limited Supply: an organisation's supply of PPE does not currently exceed a standard three-week supply.

Running Low: an organisation's supply of PPE does not currently exceed a standard two-week supply.

Non-government community and health providers: the ACT non-government community and health sectors include a wide range of not-for-profit community organisations, self-help groups, community associations and consumer advocacy groups. For the purpose of this policy, more detail is provided below:

- Non-government community service providers include disability services, out of home care residential services, family violence and sexual assault services, child and family services, child protection, homelessness and community housing services and other essential community (non health) services.
- Non-government community health services - organisations funded by the ACT Health Directorate to provide services including primary health care, supported accommodation for people with mental illness, residential drug rehabilitation, health promotion, prevention and early intervention, respite care for carers and convalescent care for the aged, care in the home and community including post-hospital support, suicide prevention, child care services to enable

parents to participate in rehabilitation programs for alcohol or other drugs, and support and education for managing chronic health conditions.

Version

This policy may be amended iteratively, as the COVID-19 response develops, all versions will be approved by the delegate, Karen Doran, Deputy Director-General for the COVID Response.

Version 1

Endorsed by Deputy Director-Generals of ACT Health, Community Services, Canberra Health Services and Justice and Community Safety Directorates.

Date 27 May 2020



ACT
Government