

Infection control advice for specimen collection in hotel quarantine

Revised 7 May 2021



This document sets out the minimum infection control requirements for specimen collection in hotel quarantine.

Entities responsible for specimen collection may exceed these minimum requirements at their discretion if deemed necessary.

Quarantine is a public health measure to prevent transmission of COVID-19 from people who may have been exposed to the causative virus, SARS-CoV-2. All quarantined guests must be considered as **potentially infectious**.

COVID-19 is spread through inhalation of infectious respiratory droplets or through contact by contaminated hands with the eyes, nose, or face. Hands may be contaminated after touching surfaces on which infectious droplets have landed. Therefore, the key measures to protect against transmission of COVID-19 are:

- performing hand hygiene
 - Regularly clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water.
 - Hands must be cleaned before and after applying personal protective equipment (PPE), after contact with any person in quarantine, after touching any surface or item, before eating or drinking, and after using the bathroom.
- maintaining at least a 1.5 metres physical distance from persons in quarantine where possible.
- wearing a mask where a physical distance of at least 1.5 metres cannot be maintained and requesting quarantined persons to wear masks, where appropriate.

Correct application, removal and disposal of recommended PPE and cleaning of equipment are also critical in preventing transmission and cross-contamination.

Precautions and PPE when collecting respiratory specimens

Collectors must not enter the guest room, unless there is no other way to collect the specimen.

Collectors are to collect specimens at the guest room doorway wearing appropriate PPE.

A buddy system should be in place to monitor the collector for any PPE breaches.

Collectors should not bring any item into the guest doorway or room except the swab (or saliva specimen container, if applicable).

When collecting respiratory specimens, transmission-based precautions should be observed regardless of whether the persons in quarantine have symptoms.

Collection of upper respiratory specimens (nasopharyngeal, deep nasal and oropharyngeal swabs) is normally a low-risk procedure. In hotel quarantine, the collector is likely to collect specimens from many guests in succession. The advice for the PPE in cases like this has been adjusted accordingly. Collection should be performed using **standard, contact and airborne precautions**. The PPE required comprises of **a long-sleeved fluid-resistant gown,**

disposable apron, P2 or N95 respirator, protective eyewear (face shield or safety glasses) and gloves.

Note: Refer to the Queensland Health [Interim infection prevention and control guidelines for the management of COVID-19 in healthcare settings](#) for more detailed information.

The correct process to put on PPE is as follows:

- Perform hand hygiene.
- Put on long-sleeved fluid-resistant gown. Fasten the back of the gown at the neck and waist. Put a disposable plastic apron over the gown.
- Put on your correctly fitted P2 or N95 respirator. Place the bands of the mask over the head in the locations identified by the manufacturer. Secure the ties of the respirator at the middle of the head and neck. Fit the flexible band to nose bridge and ensure respirator is fitted snug to face and below the chin. Perform a fit check.
- Put on protective eyewear (face shield or safety glasses).
- Put on gloves. Pull back to cover wrist of long-sleeved gown.

Removal of PPE carries a risk of self- and cross-contamination. The following principles should be observed:

- PPE must be removed in the designated removal area on each floor.
- If the guest has symptoms of COVID-19 or is feeling unwell, or if there is any soiling/contamination of PPE, all PPE should be changed before collecting specimen(s) from the next guest.
- If the guest is well and there is no contamination, the mask, gown and protective eyewear may be left on, changing only gloves and plastic apron before collecting specimen(s) from the next guest (and taking care to avoid self-contamination when removing gloves and apron) and noting that:
 - hand hygiene must be performed each time a plastic apron and/or gloves are removed and safely discarded
- All PPE is to be removed at the completion of a specimen collection on a floor.
- Hand hygiene is to be meticulously performed during the removal of PPE, as described below.

The correct process to remove PPE is as follows:

- Remove gloves, being careful not to contaminate bare hands with the outside of the gloves, which are considered contaminated.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- Remove apron by untying or breaking the ties and pulling the apron away from the body, touching the inside of the apron only. The front of the apron is considered contaminated and must not be touched.
- Perform hand hygiene.

- Remove gown by untying or breaking the fasteners and pulling the gown away from the body, touching the inside of the gown only. The front and sleeves of the gown are considered contaminated and must not be touched.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- Remove protective eyewear (face shield or safety glasses) by tilting the head forward and lifting the head band or earpieces. The front of the protective eyewear is considered contaminated and must not be touched. For re-usable protective eyewear, follow the local process for cleaning, which should include the use of a detergent/disinfectant wipe and placing the cleaned protective eyewear on a clean surface.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- Remove P2 or N95 respirator by pulling the elastic straps up and over the head and removing it down and away from the face without touching the front of the respirator. The front of the P2 or N95 respirator is considered contaminated and must not be touched.
- Perform hand hygiene.
- A new respirator and protective eyewear are to be donned prior to moving to the lift to go to the next floor.

Used PPE and waste generated in the collection of specimens are to be disposed of in clinical waste. All other waste, including PPE **not** used during specimen collection can be disposed of into the general waste, in accordance with the waste management plan in place at the facility. Please note: Although this is the order of removal that is used by Queensland Health, there are other orders of removal that are taught. Provided that the person removing their PPE has been trained and is competent to follow a particular order of removal, these can be followed. Gloves must still be removed first and the mask must be removed last.

When a guest can come to the doorway for specimen collection

Collect the swab or saliva specimen at the guest room doorway. Ensure that the following process is observed:

- Apply PPE as described above.
- Request and ensure all guests in the room are wearing masks before opening the door.
- Ask guests, one at a time, to wait inside the doorway for swab collection. Ask the guest to check the label applied to the specimen container is correct before proceeding.
- Any other residents in the room are asked to maintain at least a 1.5 m distance from the person being swabbed and the healthcare worker, preferably in another room such as the bathroom.
- Any equipment brought to the room should be placed on a trolley that is placed 1.5 metres away from the room.
- Collect the swabs as prescribed and hand guest the saliva specimen container or saliva swab (for saliva specimens collected into a container per testing laboratory instructions or self-collected using saliva swabs, if applicable). Instruct guest to provide saliva sample and hand back to collector.
- To collect deep nasal, nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs as well as saliva swabs collected at the same time as upper respiratory specimens (if applicable), stand slightly

to the side of the guest to avoid exposure to respiratory secretions should the guest cough or sneeze.

- Once specimen collection is completed, ensure labelling requirements are completed and place the specimen in a biohazard bag, remove PPE as described above in the designated removal area after stepping away from the doorway and the guest has closed the door.
- If the outside of the biohazard bag has been contaminated, don fresh gloves and discard the biohazard bag into the clinical waste and use a new bag. Remove gloves and clean hands.

When a guest is unable to come to the doorway for specimen collection

Collect the swab or saliva specimen inside the guest room and ensure that the following process is observed:

- Apply PPE as described above.
- Request and ensure all guests in the room are wearing masks before opening the door. Specimen collection for such guests should be left to the last for each floor to facilitate this.
- Ask any other people sharing the room to move to another room (such as the bathroom) while the swab is being taken and maintain at least a 1.5 metres distance from the staff member.
- Take only the swabs or saliva specimen container inside the room.
- Once inside the room, ask the guest to check their details on the label prior to proceeding.
- Collect the swabs as prescribed and instruct guest to provide saliva sample and hand it back to the collector (for saliva specimens collected into a container per testing laboratory instructions or self-collected using saliva swabs, if applicable).
- To collect deep nasal, nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs as well as saliva swabs collected at the same time as upper respiratory specimens (if applicable), stand slightly to the side of the guest to avoid exposure should the guest cough or sneeze.
- Once specimen collection is completed, leave the guest's room and ask the guest to close the door. Avoid touching the outside door handle.
- Place the specimen in a biohazard bag and remove PPE as described above, in the designated removal area.
- If the outside of the biohazard bag has been contaminated, don fresh gloves and discard the biohazard bag into the clinical waste and use a new bag. Remove gloves and clean hands.

Quarantine workers

If it is a quarantine facility worker undergoing daily saliva testing reports symptoms of COVID-19, **do not take a swab**. Instead, request they immediately don a surgical mask and remain in a room away from others and contact their supervisor. Contact the Venue Health Manager (VHM) and/or COVID Safe Monitor (CSM) for advice regarding swabbing.

Cleaning

Collectors must observe the following process if an item is brought into a guest room:

- Do not place the item on the furniture.
- Wipe the item with a 2-in-1 detergent/disinfectant wipe shown to inactivate SARS-CoV-2 according to manufacturer directions after exiting the guest room.
- Remove gloves.
- Perform hand hygiene.

Note: Refer to the Queensland Health [COVID-19 cleaning, disinfection and waste management advice](#) for more information on cleaning and waste management.

Testing requirements for pathology collectors

Pathology collectors who regularly test persons in quarantine facilities are subject to surveillance testing for COVID-19 infection under the [COVID-19 Testing for Quarantine Facility Workers Direction](#) and in accordance with the [Operational protocol for COVID-19 testing of quarantine facility workers](#).

This measure is important as pathology collectors have regular close contact with potentially infectious people, creating an increased risk for opportunities for inadvertent transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Should you be identified as having been potentially exposed to COVID-19, you will be assessed and managed in accordance with public health guidelines.