

INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL COVID-19 COMMITTEE

Bulletin #136a – COVID-19 – ID-IPC – Revised Continuous Use of Eye Protection – Apr 22 2021

Revision to the continuous use of eye protection during the Yellow phase

In response to the evolving situation related to COVID-19 variants of concern (VOCs) within the province of New Brunswick, the ID-IPC Regional COVID-19 Committee is recommending that health care workers (HCWs) working in all Horizon **Emergency Departments** wear facial protection (medical grade face mask **and** eye protection (goggles / face shield)) **continuously, at all times in all areas of their workplace** during the Yellow phase when a physical barrier (i.e., plexiglass) is not in place to prevent transmission of droplets.

COVID-19 variants have been termed variants of concern (VOCs), because they have been associated with increased transmissibility, severity of illness, and / or possible immune evasion with potential implications for reinfection.

While VOCs spread more easily, the routes of transmission for COVID-19 VOCs remain the same as non-variant COVID-19 and spread primarily by respiratory droplets and / or contact with contaminated surfaces or items. COVID-19 VOCs can also be spread through the airborne route during an Aerosol Generating Medical Procedure (AGMP).

Current Infection Prevention and Control measures are effective. Because of increased transmissibility of VOCs, the need for strict compliance with Droplet / Contact and Full Precautions (when there is risk for an AGMP) is of the utmost importance, as there is a lower margin of error with adherence to current infection prevention and control measures including donning and doffing personnel protective equipment.