

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of the Human Guide Technique

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Health and Safety

To promote health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the use of a face mask, and eye protection, the following protocol using disposable sleeves (or similar) can be followed during use of the Human Guide technique and its variations. The following guidelines can be included in any Provider Support Agreement, Orientation & Mobility Plan, Service Delivery Plan or other document that includes direction for use of the Human Guide technique. Please also be sure to consult with your local nurse educator or infection control educator with questions related to specific circumstances or individuals.

COVID-19 Precaution for Use of Human Guide

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, disposable sleeves can be worn by guides during use of the Human Guide technique with individuals who have vision impairment or blindness. Although cough etiquette suggests covering a cough or sneeze into the elbow/upper sleeve, it must be noted that individuals while using Human Guide are often gripping this same area (that many use to shield a cough or sneeze). Depending upon life/work circumstance, some Human Guides may also frequently guide multiple individuals over the course of a day. Proper use of disposable sleeves helps to keep arms and clothing clean from dirt, particulates, germs and liquids; and provides a level of protection from possible cross-contamination.

Cough/Sneeze

Although cough etiquette (pre-COVID 19) suggests covering a cough or sneeze into the elbow/upper sleeve, it must be noted that individuals while using Human Guide are often gripping this same area (that many have used to shield a cough or sneeze). At this time, coughing or sneezing must occur into the mask. Guides must be prepared with additional masks to use if the one they are wearing becomes soiled.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

Face Mask

- Face mask(s) should be worn during use of the Human Guide technique as needed/directed, especially as social distance cannot be kept during use of this technique.

Eye Protection

- Wear eye protection in addition to a facemask to ensure the eyes, nose, and mouth are all protected from exposure to respiratory secretions during direct encounters where a social distance cannot be maintained. Face shields or goggles are considered appropriate eye protection; prescription glasses alone are not.

When to Wear Disposable Sleeves

- Disposable sleeves are to be put on prior to initiating contact for use of Human Guide.
- Wear one disposable sleeve on the appropriate arm if an individual holds only your right or left arm during use of the Human Guide technique.
- Wear two disposable sleeves, (one on each arm) if the individual being guided needs to switch sides during use of the Human Guide technique.
- Disposable sleeves are to be properly removed while wearing nitrile/disposable gloves and thrown away after use by Human Guide to prevent cross-contamination. (Please see protocol for removing sleeve).
- Disposable sleeves are to be properly removed and disposed of after working with one individual and a fresh sleeve put on before working with someone else to prevent cross-contamination, following instructions as bulleted above.

Handwashing

- Prior to putting on the disposable sleeve(s), follow the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for handwashing.
 - Wet your hands with clean, warm, running water, and apply soap.
 - Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
 - Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
 - Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
 - Dry your hands using a clean towel.
 - Turn off Faucets using a clean, dry, paper towel.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

How to Put on Disposable Sleeve(s)

- Wash hands properly for 20 seconds with soap and water, following CDC guidelines.
- Pull plastic sleeve protector up high enough to cover forearm, elbow and upper arm.

How to Remove Disposable Sleeve(s)

- Wash hands properly for 20 seconds with soap and water, following CDC guidelines.
- Wearing nitrile/disposable gloves peel the sleeve away from the top, turning it inside out.
- Roll the sleeve into a bundle and discard in a trash receptacle.
- To remove gloves, grasp the outside edge near the wrist.
- Peel the glove away from the hand, turning the glove inside out.
- Hold it in the opposite gloved hand.
- Slide an ungloved finger under the wrist of the remaining glove, then peel it off from the inside, creating a “bag” for both used gloves.
- Discard in trash receptacle.
- Wash hands properly for 20 seconds with soap and water, following CDC guidelines.

Alternatives to Use in Place of Disposable Sleeves

- If bare arm(s), Human Guide must wash hands and arm(s) before and after guiding an individual.
- Have change(s) of clothing on hand (such as long sleeved shirts) so that the upper sleeve(s) are clean and fresh for use of Human Guide.
- Have additional outer layers available to be worn by the guide to cover the upper sleeve.
- Protective arm sleeves could be made of fabric and re-used after laundering.
- All clothing/fabric items must be laundered after each use.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

How to Put On Face Shield or Goggles

- When wearing an N95 respirator or face mask, select the proper eye protection to ensure that the respirator does not interfere with the correct positioning of the eye protection, and the eye protection does not affect the fit or seal of the respirator.
- Face shields provide full face coverage.
- Goggles also provide excellent protection for eyes, but fogging is common.

How to Remove Face Shield or Goggles

- Perform hand hygiene.
- Remove face shield or goggles. Carefully remove face shield or goggles by grabbing the strap and pulling upwards and away from head. Do not touch the front of face shield or goggles.

How to Disinfect Face Shield or Goggles

- While wearing gloves, carefully wipe the inside and then the outside of the shield or goggles using a clean cloth saturated with neutral detergent solution, rinse if needed.
- Carefully wipe the outside of the shield or goggles using a clean cloth or wipe saturated with hospital disinfectant solution; be sure it remains wet for the required contact time.
- Wipe the outside of the face shield or goggles with clean water to remove residue.
- Fully dry (air dry or use a clean absorbent towel)
- Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

COVID-19 Protocol for Use of Human Guide (continued)

Resources

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Guidelines for Handwashing

- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

Disposable Sleeves

- As product availability changes frequently by company, please use internet search terms for “disposable sleeves” or “protective sleeves”.

Donning and Removing of Personal Protective Equipment

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
- <https://www.infectioncontroltoday.com/personal-protective-equipment/donning-and-removing-ppe-infection-prevention>

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Please also see MCB/DDS Partnership “Focus” resources:

- Keeping Healthy –When Using Orientation & Mobility Techniques
- Keeping Canes, Visual Aids, Cellphones and Devices Spotless & Sanitized

focusonvisionandvisionloss.org/downloadable-resources--videos.html

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