

Frequently Asked Questions in Response to The Joint Commission's Position Statement on Use of Face Masks Brought from Home

Why did The Joint Commission feel it was necessary to develop this position statement?

The Joint Commission's Office of Quality and Patient Safety has received numerous complaints from health care workers about inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE). For example, staff have reported:

- Lack of N95 masks for performing aerosolizing procedures
- Having to wear a surgical mask for a prolonged period (up to a week)
- Not being allowed to wear a mask when exposed to a large number of patients who could have COVID-19 (i.e., concerns about caring for asymptomatic and minimally symptomatic when COVID-19 is prevalent)
- Working without routinely wearing masks even after an outbreak occurred among the medical staff from an infected physician

The American College of Emergency Physicians and the American College of Physicians also shared similar concerns voiced by their members. We also have received reports of hospitals citing nonexistent Joint Commission standards to prevent staff from bringing their own PPE to work in shortage situations.

Is The Joint Commission advocating for routine use of N Nidse?

No. Hospitals must conserve N95 respirators as much as possible to protect staff who perform high-risk procedures that aerosolize viral particles. However, there are reports of hospitals