

Unions win increased access to N-95 masks

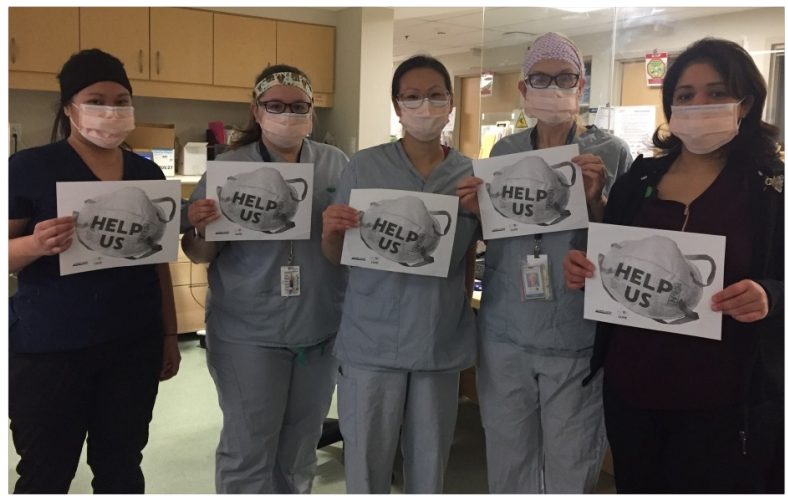
OCHU-CUPE, SEIU & Unifor sued to increase protections for workers in hospitals and in long term care

What is the definition of a COVID-19 Outbreak?

Whether or not your workplace is in an “outbreak” of COVID-19 is decided by the local medical officer of health, not by your employer.

For hospitals, an outbreak is usually when two people contract COVID-19 while at the hospital within two weeks of each other.

For long term care homes, an outbreak is usually when one staff person or resident has a positive COVID-19 test. The government has told us that this definition of an outbreak in long term care may change to 2 cases in the near future.

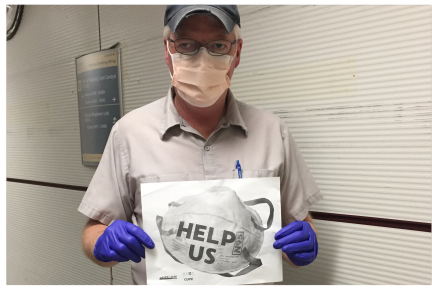


To resolve this court action, the government will require hospitals and ltc homes to give workers clear access to better protections when they are dealing with patients or residents who may have COVID-19. Workers have the right to an N-95 mask in three situations:

1. When the Workplace is in an “Outbreak” and you are within 2 metres of a COVID Patient

When a hospital or a ltc home has an outbreak of COVID-19, workers who may come within two metres (or six and a half feet) of a known or suspected COVID-19 patient/resident have a right to an N-95 mask.

You have to ask your employer for an N-95 mask, but they must give it to you. Ask for an N-95 mask any time you are doing work and cannot be sure that you will be able to stay more than two metres away from a COVID-19 patient or resident.



Minimum requirements for personal protective equipment

Workers at hospitals and long-term care homes who are interacting with suspected or confirmed COVID patients/residents always have to be given, at a minimum, the following PPE *regardless of distance from the patient/resident*:

- Surgical/procedure masks;
- Gloves;
- Face shields or goggles;
- Appropriate isolation gowns.

In long-term care homes, workers have to wear surgical masks at all times during a shift, except when on a break or when they are not in contact with residents.

2. When a Regulated Health Professional (e.g. an RPN) Decides an N-95 is Needed

Every time an RPN or other regulated healthcare professional interacts with a known or suspected COVID patient or resident, they must conduct a point of care risk assessment to decide if they need an N-95 respirator.

If a regulated healthcare professional decides that an N-95 mask is needed when interacting with a COVID-19 patient, **then the hospital or long-term care home has to give an N-95 mask to that worker and to every other worker who is present for that patient interaction and this cannot be denied by the employer.**

3. When Certain Kinds of Medical Procedures Are Done on a COVID Patient

All workers in any room where an “Aerosol Generating Medical Procedure” (also called an AGMP) is being done or is probable to be done on a COVID-19 patient must wear an N-95 respirator. **You also have to wear an N-95 respirator if you are in a room where AGMPs are frequently done, even if they are not doing an AGMP at the time you are in the room.**

