

Policy Applies to:

- All staff employed by Mercy Hospital, Credentialed Specialists, students, patients, visitors and contractors will be supported to meet policy requirements.

Related Standards:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016
- EQulP - 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 Infection Control
- EQulP 3.2 Health and Safety

Rationale:

Mercy Hospital will ensure the safety of its staff by providing suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) when the risk to health and safety cannot be eliminated or adequately controlled by other means.

Requirements for personal protective equipment for infection control hazards do not come under this policy (Refer to Personal Protective Equipment – Infection Prevention and Control).

Definitions:

PPE - is anything used or worn by a person (including clothing) to minimise risks to the person's health and safety. This may include respiratory protective equipment, hearing protection, eye protection, protective clothing, and safety harness systems, (*Worksafe*).

Hierarchy of Control – is set out in the Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations and guides risk management process to ensure consideration is first given to elimination, then minimisation, administrative control and finally PPE provision.

Objectives:

- To provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, specialists, patients, contractors and visitors
- To ensure the most effective control measures have been considered through the hierarchy of controls before implementing the use of PPE
- To ensure appropriate PPE is identified to minimise the risks created by workplace hazards
- To ensure fit for purpose PPE is provided at Mercy Hospital for use by staff
- To ensure adequate training in the use of PPE is provided
- To monitor the use of PPE and evaluate effectiveness

Cultural Considerations:

People at work, or at a workplace, should not be exposed to increased risks because their religious or cultural attire makes eliminating or reducing risk difficult.

Some examples to manage risk are:

- Taping or covering jewellery
- Wearing overalls, hair or head coverings rather than banning particular attire
- Using alternative safety equipment, e.g. earplugs instead of ear muffs or face masks that accommodate beards
- Minimising the number of people performing a particular task or entering a particular risk area.

Implementation: PPE is to be provided to all staff when it is necessary to protect staff from a hazard that cannot be eliminated or sufficiently minimised to a safe level.

PPE should not be used as a sole control for any identified hazards or exposures, but used in combined effort to mitigate the risk of injury or harm to individuals.

At Mercy PPE is used for:

- Blood and bodily fluid exposure risk
- Noise exposure
- Exposure to fumes or particles in the air
- Risk of particles or chemicals coming in contact with eyes
- Infectious diseases as applicable *refer to IPC PPE*.

Risk Management

Department Managers and Leaders, Health and Safety Specialist, Infection Prevention and Control Nurse and Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) will in consultation with staff:

- Ensure elimination or minimisation options are considered before implementing PPE controls
- Ensure appropriate PPE requirements are identified as part of risk assessments of activities
- Regularly review the risk assessment of activities if substances or work processes change
- Identify the most suitable type of PPE that is required
- Ensure PPE is available to those who need it
- Inform staff of the risks involved in their work and why PPE is required
- Monitor compliance through health and safety category and contractor health and safety audits
- Ensure other means of control are used in addition to the use of PPE

Manager's Responsibilities

Must ensure that:

- Through risk assessment, where PPE is required, suitable PPE is provided and made accessible to employees
- PPE is properly stored, maintained, cleaned, repaired and replaced when necessary
- Adequate information and training is provided to those who require PPE
- PPE is appropriately and consistently used
- Use of PPE is monitored and reviewed
- The PPE provided fits staff appropriately
- Other means of hazard control have been attempted and explored before PPE is used
- PPE is utilised in conjunction with other controls as much as possible

Employee's Responsibilities

All employees must ensure that:

- They use PPE whenever it is required
- Attend and comply with training, instruction and information
- Check the condition of their PPE
- Store, clean and maintain their PPE
- Ensure they are wearing PPE correctly
- Ensuring the PPE fits correctly and reporting to their manager if PPE does not fit
- Report losses, defects or other problems with PPE to their manager

Evaluation:

- Staff health and safety orientation and induction records
- Staff training records
- Category Audit reports
- Incident reports

Associated Documents

External

- General risk and workplace management - Worksafe – part 1 (section 4)
- Personal Protective Equipment – A guide for businesses (Worksafe)
- Lippincott 'Personal Protective Equipment (PPE; putting on)

Internal

- Organisational Hazard Registers
- Area Specific Work Manuals
- Personal Protective Equipment – Infection Control
- Hazard Identification policy

- Risk Management policy
- MDRO policy
- Personal Protective Equipment - Housekeeping Work Manual
- Monitoring Workplace Exposure and staff Health Policy