



Guidance on Taking Biometric Samples during Coronavirus (updated August 2021)

On 14/07/2021, in response to the government announcing their intention to remove the legal requirement for PPE for the public, the NPCC stated that it was their intention ‘to retain workplace PPE guidance and all existing infection prevention control measures in policing at its current level, subject to regular review’⁷. This guidance has been updated in light of the NPCC COVID-19 PPE Operational Guidance⁴ which became valid on 16/08/2021.

Every missed biometric sample prevents the opportunity to detect crime and additionally, in the case of fingerprints will enable challenges to the accuracy of criminal records in the future. As such, the NPCC consider that it is vital for routine biometric sampling to continue, and where it has been suspended, for it to be resumed as soon as possible.

Guidance given in this document is for consideration only and it is for local forces to undertake their own risk assessments to determine the best course of action for the recovery of biometric samples based on threat and risk. The guidance given in this document relates to PPE and hygiene recommendations only. For guidance on the use of the National Test and Trace Programme App in this setting you should consider local and NPCC guidance¹.

In all cases good hygiene practise measures (self and equipment/facilities) should be observed. PPE is supplemental to these measures and is necessary when social distancing cannot be achieved². Maintaining social distance whilst obtaining the required biometric samples is not practical and the following advice on use of PPE³ applies equally to biometric samples from detainees, for DBS checks, for vetting and for any other purpose.

Information in the below table is adapted from the NPCC COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Operational Guidance⁴.

Hygiene and PPE requirement	COVID-19 Risk Grade (force specific)		Cleaning of sampling area and equipment ⁵
	Standard	High	
Hygiene measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth Wash hands for 20s with soap and hot water and when not available use alcohol based hand sanitiser before putting on and after taking off PPE 		
Fluid resistant mask	Yes	Yes	Risk assess
Disposable gloves	Yes	Yes	Yes
Disposable apron	Yes	Yes	Yes
Goggles/eye protection	Risk assess (to be used if taking a mouth swab)	Yes	Risk assess
Fluid resistant coverall/over-suit	No	Risk assess	Risk assess

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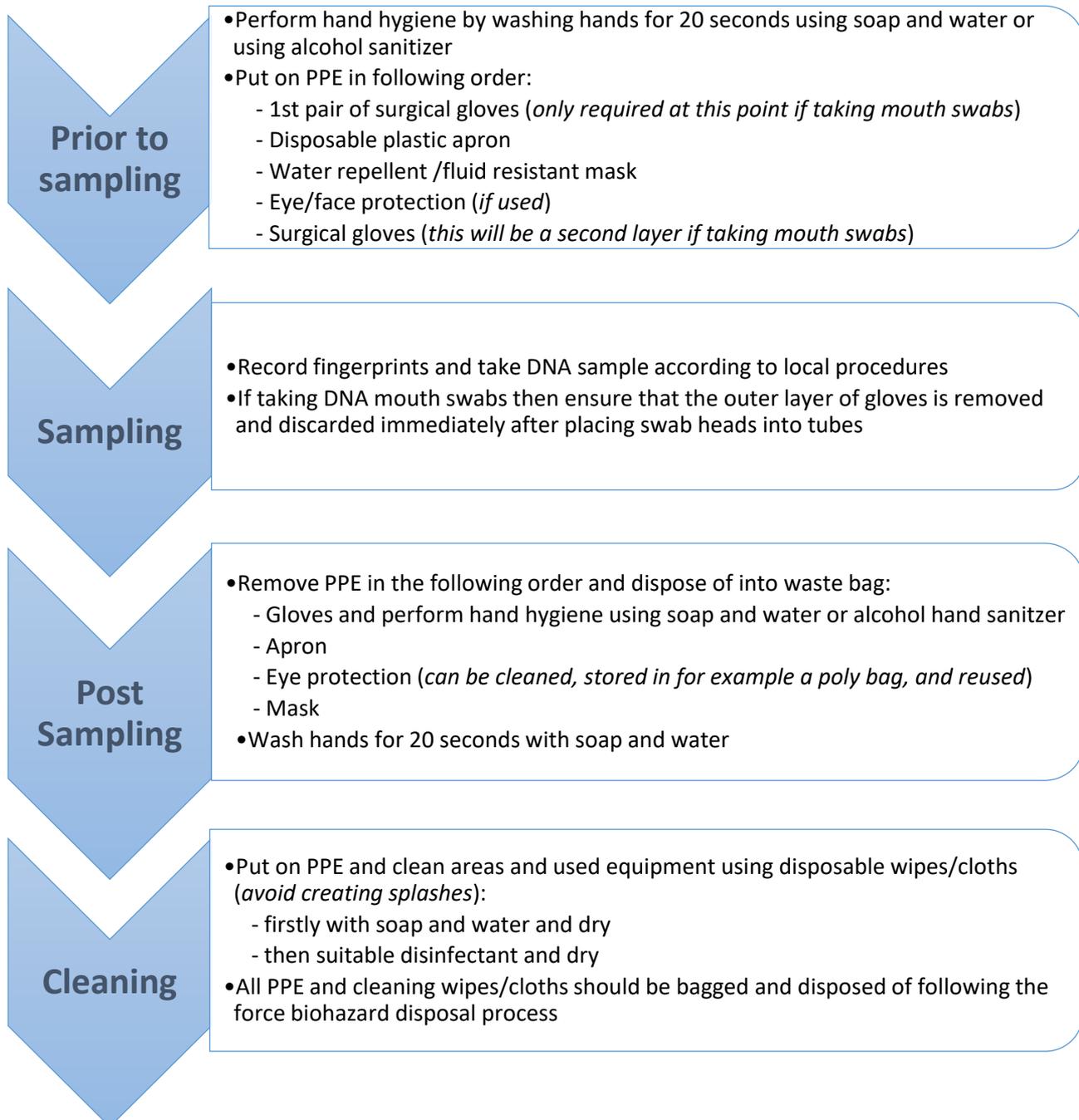
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Apart from eye protection, PPE must be disposable.

Other considerations:

- If required, consideration can be given to asking the person having their samples taken to wear a face covering/mask⁶; this can be temporarily removed at the point where a mouth swab and/or photograph is taken.
- If one or more of the required biometric samples cannot be taken, the rationale should be recorded as to why full biometric profiles were not taken and what was taken instead; PNC markers should accurately reflect the status of the samples obtained or the reason they were not taken.

Acknowledgements:

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References

1. Guidance from NPCC Lead for Civil Contingencies dated 10th November 2020, issued on 'Chiefsnet'
2. Guidance for first responders and others in close contact with individuals with potential coronavirus infection. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-interim-guidance-for-first-responders/interim-guidance-for-first-responders-and-others-in-close-contact-with-symptomatic-people-with-potential-2019-ncov>
3. Personal protective equipment use for non-aerosol generating procedures. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-use-for-non-aerosol-generating-procedures>
4. NPCC NPoCC COVID-19 PPE Operational Guidance, issued on Chiefsnet 13/08/2021
5. Cleaning in non-healthcare settings. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
6. PPE. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe> and Press release. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-advised-to-cover-faces-in-enclosed-spaces>
7. [PPE and Infection Control - Operational Guidance update \(pnn.police.uk\)](#) 'Chiefsnet'