

"Stop the pandemic: Safety and health at work can save lives"

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work is celebrated annually on 28 April to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. It was established by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

On this day the Advocacy and EU Matters of the Europe Region draws attention to the need to raise awareness in relation to the observance of safety and health measures at work, which can reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 infection in the workplace and thus prevent many thousand infections, post-maternal syndromes and deaths.

Throughout the pandemic, Physiotherapists have worked on the front lines against COVID-19, to minimize the impact of this public health crisis, providing crucial services in the context of prevention, rehabilitation and crisis management.

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential when treating patients with COVID-19 and requires compliance with specific protocols regarding the order to properly put on, take off, and dispose of such equipment. Wrong order, especially when disposing of protective equipment, can lead to infection of the healthcare professional or caregiver of the person suffering from COVID-19. The area where the procedure takes place must be ergonomically correct to contribute to the smooth use / disposal, which will be reminiscent of the protocol process to avoid an accident.

Important considerations:

- Before the application of PPE, the removal of all personal items (watch, rings, jewellery, mobile phone, etc.) is mandatory;
- The PPE should be put on before entering the patient's room;
- The removal of PPE should be done in a safe place and distance from the patient (> 2m, or in the vestibule, if any). The eye protection and high respiratory protection mask must be removed outside the patient's ward. All PPE is disposed of as infectious waste. Reusable PPE must be disposed of in a special container and the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning, disinfecting and / or sterilizing must be followed;
- Movements when removing Personal Protective Equipment should not be hasty and noisy;
- The following sequence is recommended and safe, but alternative sequences can also be done: 1. remove gloves without touching the outside of the glove and perform hand hygiene; 2. Remove gown/apron, without touching the front of the gown and perform hand hygiene; 3. remove eye protection and mask outside the patient's ward and perform hand hygiene;
- The presence of another health professional is recommended for the active supervision of these procedures or, alternatively, the use of a full-length mirror to avoid mishandling is recommended, to decrease the risk of infection

[ECDC Guidance for wearing and removing personal protective equipment in healthcare settings for the care of patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 This document provides support to healthcare workers managing suspected or confirmed cases of novel coronavirus 2019 \(COVID-19\). Available in 26 languages.](#)

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The Europe Region World Physiotherapy is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation that represents the physiotherapy profession at European Level. The Organisation has a membership of 36 Physiotherapy Associations, representing 184.107 physiotherapists in Europe.