



**STATE OF WASHINGTON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES**  
*Aging and Long-Term Support Administration*  
*PO Box 45600, Olympia, Washington 98504-5600*

September 3, 2021

**AL TSA: AFH #2021-048**  
**AL TSA: ALF #2021-048**  
**AL TSA: CCRSS #2021-043**  
**AL TSA: ESF #2021-042**  
**AL TSA: ICF/IID #2021-039**  
**AL TSA: NH #2021-065**

**CONTINUED USE OF EYE PROTECTION TO PREVENT COVID-19 INFECTION TO  
PROTECT YOURSELF AND THE PEOPLE YOU SERVE**

Dear Administrator/Provider/Superintendent:

Residential Care Services (RCS) staff have reported that many residents and facilities object to continued use of face shields both by RCS staff and facility staff. This letter is to confirm that during inspections, surveys, and investigations, RCS staff will continue to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Interim Infection Prevention and Control

Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic guidance for wearing eye protection (link [here](#)). This guidance will also be used during assessment of provider infection prevention and control practices.

The CDC guidance states eye protection should be worn during patient, resident, and client care encounters to protect eyes from exposure to respiratory secretions when working in facilities when located in communities with moderate to substantial (or high) community transmission. HealthData.gov publishes COVID-19 transmission data weekly. You can access the CDC COVID-19 Tracker - Integrated County View [here](#).

The CDC guidance has been reviewed on multiple levels, including DOH and Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). This guidance is the national infection prevention and control standard related to COVID-19.


The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) identifies eye protection can be provided by goggles, face shields, safety glasses, and full face respirators (link [here](#)). There are certain benefits and limitations of eye protection to consider.

- Safety glasses provide impact protection, but do not provide the same level of splash or droplet protection as goggles and generally should not be used for infection control purposes.
- Face shields are commonly used as an infection control alternative to goggles. As opposed to goggles, a face shield can also provide protection to other facial areas.

You and your staff must wear eye protection when there is moderate to substantial community transmission of COVID-19 infection to protect yourself and the people you serve.

Thank you for your continued commitment to resident health and safety. If you have any questions, please contact [Katherine.Ander@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:Katherine.Ander@dshs.wa.gov)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Anbesse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Mike Anbesse, Director  
Residential Care Services

*DSHS: "Transforming Lives"*