

Trained Monitor Reference

1. Monitor: Introduction

A trained monitor is a clinician whose sole responsibilities are to guide healthcare workers (HCWs) as they don and doff personal protective equipment (PPE) and prevent breaches in infection prevention and control protocols. When acting as a trained monitor, you will not be delivering care directly to patients. Instead you will focus on ensuring the safety of primaries and assistants.

You may directly assist your care delivery colleagues as they don their PPE.

When you work with a primary and assistant you will not physically assist the HCW after he/she has had contact with the isolated patient or their environment. You are there to monitor, protect, and guide them through the protocols of donning and doffing PPE. An effective monitor:

- is vigilant in spotting defects in equipment;
- is proactive in identifying potential risks;
- follows the provided checklist, but focuses on the big picture;
- is attentive to detail and process;
- is informative, supportive and well-paced in issuing instructions or advice;
- leads in problem solving unanticipated events as they occur
- always practices hand hygiene immediately after providing assistance

2. Roles as the Trained Monitor

To ensure the safety of your colleagues, you must lead, protect, and guide others through the process of safely and correctly donning and doffing PPE.

As a trained monitor, you are responsible for:

- Monitoring compliance with PPE protocols
- Guiding, correcting, and assisting during donning and doffing
- Protecting yourself through proper PPE use during doffing, and
- Anticipating and planning for risks.

3. Trained Monitors are Active Participants

You turn the checklist and protocols into practice. You do much more than record; you help ensure the safety of your colleagues. You will guide the process both by your voice and actions. Besides reading the verbal instructions from the checklist, you also have the responsibility of keeping the HCWs calm and proceeding at a slow and deliberate pace.

4. Maintain Situational Awareness

The physical space should be set up with safety as top priority, but never assume all is as it should be. Keep the 'big picture' in mind, always prepare as if something could go wrong. Survey donning & doffing areas; provide suggestions to help staff identify and avoid potential protocol breaches. Ensure the correct equipment, supplies and people are present and everyone knows the process before beginning a task.

5. Remain Vigilant

Use the S.T.E.P. practice to make sure the physical surroundings promote safety. With each section, ask yourself questions to ensure you are properly prepared to begin the donning and doffing process.

- a. Situation – What’s the situation? Is there correct equipment, supplies and people present e.g., PPE in needed sizes? Is equipment functioning properly? Is the process set up to ensure safety for all before & after attending to the patient?
- b. Team members - Be familiar with the pertinent protocols, e.g., donning and doffing PPE, specimen collection, spill management. Are staff fatigued or feeling anxious? Are you helping them feel safe? Are they wearing and using the proper PPE? Has everyone been trained in the process properly?
- c. Environment - Anticipate contamination of areas, surfaces or equipment. Is the room set up for donning or doffing properly? Are the required waste receptacles available and within reach? Is the proper signage posted where it needs to be? Are you situated to be able to adequately visualize the working space of the HCW to identify breaches in protocol?
- d. Progress toward goal - Be prepared with the latest procedures and fully familiarize yourself with the steps – to the point where you can lead others through the process. Do you have the latest checklist? Are you maintaining closed loop communication and a connection with the HCW you’re assisting? Are you getting verbal confirmation as you complete each step?

6. Communication and Leadership

Safety demands active communication by the monitor and the HCW you are directing. You must lead the process, not be a casual observer.

First establish role clarity. The safety of the HCW is your top priority. Help him/her by establishing clear roles. Inform the HCW are here to help and guide him/her through the PPE donning/doffing processes as well as ensure IP&C protocols are adhered to.

Anticipate any challenges you might face by practicing and identifying steps that may require extra diligence or verbal explanations for the HCW. Put them at ease and keep them at a slow and methodical pace. By asserting your leadership and being prepared and knowledgeable, you can keep them calm and focused on donning and doffing PPE, and preparing to attend to the patient.

Before beginning either the donning or doffing process, establish proper communication protocols. Work with the HCWs to establish ‘red flag’ words so any situations can be handled safely by all parties involved. Use closed-loop communication for clarity (e.g., whenever you need to give direction have the healthcare worker repeat the command back, so there are no misunderstandings).

7. Establish ‘Red Flag’ Words

Red flag words are a verbal ‘short hand’ for important information passed between yourself and the HCW. You should have red flag words defined for situations such as a breach in protocol requiring a full stop but no immediate hazard, or a breach in protocol and immediate hazard. Make certain both you and the HCWs are in agreement on these words and clear on their meaning.

As you observe, you must get comfortable with recognizing when a HCW is in need of assistance to prevent panic or anxiety. Red flag words and hand signals may help in communicating those moments.

8. Use Closed-Loop Communication

Sender (e.g., monitor) initiates message; receiver (e.g., Primary) accepts message, provides feedback confirmation; sender verifies message was received.

9. When Do You Physically Assist?

When donning PPE, as you are both still 'clean', you may physically assist with the equipment as needed. During doffing, there is not any physical contact.

10. Donning: The Monitor's Role in Donning

Hand hygiene is critical for safety and a good method of pacing the donning and doffing process.

The monitor's role in the donning process has three major components.

1. First and foremost, you are to guide HCWs through donning according to the checklist. All checklist instructions need to be verbally confirmed – close the communications loop – before they are acted on. Assuring successful completion of each step is a major monitor role.
2. Second, as you are both in a clean area, you may, if needed, assist HCWs in donning as necessary.
3. Third, continually scan your colleagues' PPE and the environment for possible contamination risks during donning.

The checklist is a memory aid/tool that structures the donning process. Its details are important, but they are not your only focus. The big picture here is keeping your colleague, and yourself, safe by identifying and avoiding contamination risks.

11. Donning: Pre-Donning Briefing

The donning process begins when you and the HCW engage one another. Both of you should first confirm all PPE and other necessary supplies are available, conveniently located, correctly sized, and in good working order, free of any rips or tears.

Together, you should run through the order of activities on the checklist, setting expectations about the timeline and agreeing on a slow, steady and deliberate pace for completing the donning process. In addition to establishing closed loop communication, make sure there is a common understanding of what you will do if something unexpected happens.

12. Donning: Confirming Completion of Protocol Steps

Use verbal and explicit closed-loop communication for each step in the process. You tell the HCW what step to perform, he/she verbalizes back the task to ensure they understood, and you as the monitor verbalize completion.

Completion also includes a thorough check to ensure no part of the PPE is ripped, torn or otherwise vulnerable to contamination.

13. Donning: Pro-active Assistance and Identifying Potential Breaches

Act as a guide and protector by proactively identifying breaches of protocol and possible points of contamination. As examples, when you and your colleague begin the donning process you may notice that they are still wearing jewelry, or ID badges. Be sure those are removed prior to donning any equipment as they can cause rips or tears to the PPE.

Draw items that should be removed to the HCW's attention, like cell phones and ID badges well before they don any PPE. These are items which can be easily forgotten as we have them on our person every day. Other examples of proactive risk monitoring during doffing might include identifying issues with equipment, identifying placement and fit issues with PPE and maintaining control of the pace of the donning process. These are only a few examples. Protect by using common sense. Do not just depend on what is on the checklist; proactively monitor for any contamination risks.

14. Doffing: The Monitor's Role in Doffing

The monitor's role in the doffing process is to guide HCWs through doffing using the checklist provided. As with donning, ensure doffing proceeds at a slow, deliberate and methodical pace. Continually scan your colleagues' PPE and the environment for possible contamination risks during doffing.

Always engage in confirmatory, closed-loop communications with HCWs you are guiding. Assure successful completion of each doffing step; completion means a removed item is intact, has not touched 'clean' areas, and has been disposed of properly in the waste container without contaminating any HCWs.

15. Doffing: Engaging the Monitor

The doffing process begins when you acknowledge your colleague's need to exit the patient care space.

16. Doffing: Preparing the Doffing Area

Maintain awareness of the situation and anticipate needs. Scan doffing area without entering. Ensure an appropriately maintained and not over-filled medical infectious waste container is available. All other equipment and supplies necessary for doffing should also be available and in good working order.

17. Doffing: The Pre-doffing Briefing

Once ready for doffing (you've indicated the HCW can enter the doffing area), remind him/her to wait for your instructions before beginning the doffing protocol. It is important to remind him/her not to touch his/her face or any other exposed body parts during the process. Appropriate communications will help you keep them safe.

Take the time to go through the order and the activities on the checklist and set expectations for a slow and steady pace for safely completing the doffing process.

Prompted by the checklist, provide step-by-step instructions. Use closed-loop communication throughout the process. Each step should be acknowledged by the HCW, the action taken, and then re-acknowledged by the monitor as completed. Only then should you move on to the next step. Be familiar with the checklist but remember your focus is on the bigger picture.

18. Doffing: Role Clarity for Assistant

The assistant is also a HCW. Ensure the assistant is available and wearing appropriate PPE. The assistant should be well-trained on the protocols as well.

Remain outside doffing area to observe for signs of contamination and guide the assistant as he/she inspects and assists the primary doff PPE. Disinfect any areas identified as contaminated using Accel Intervention.

Ensure the assistant decontaminates his/her gloves after EACH contact with the HCW.

19. Doffing: Anticipating Risks

Your role goes beyond reading the checklist. You should proactively inform the HCW of risks at different steps of the process. For example, when the hood of coveralls is assisted off, a HCW may want to (inadvertently) wipe his/her brow or push his/her hair back. When providing directions for these steps, you can offer supportive comments and reminders to be careful not to make those errors.