



Many organizations have published general guidelines for the use of personal protective equipment, including gowns, within healthcare settings.

OSHA¹

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides the health care industry with standards that encourage continual improvement in work place safety and health. As it relates to apparel, OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogen Standard is critical in defining and understanding what "protective" means:

"If a product is to be truly protective, no blood or other potentially infectious material may pass through or reach the employee's work clothes, street clothes, undergarments, skin, eyes, mouth or other mucous membranes under normal conditions of use and for the duration of time which the protective equipment will be used." OSHA further defines personal protective as "specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against a hazard. General work clothes (e.g. uniforms, pants, shirts, or blouses) not intended to function as protection against a hazard are not considered to be personal protective equipment."

CDC

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Standard Precautions:²

- Wear a gown that is appropriate to the task, to protect skin and prevent soiling or contamination of clothing during procedures and patient-care activities when contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions is anticipated.
- Wear a gown for direct patient contact if the patient has uncontained secretions or excretions.
- Remove gown and perform hand hygiene before leaving the patient's environment.
- Do not reuse gowns, even for repeated contacts with the same patient.
- Routine donning of gowns upon entrance into a high risk unit (e.g., ICU, NICU, HSCT unit) is not indicated.

CDC Isolation Precautions:³

- Don gown upon entry into the room or cubicle. Remove gown and observe hand hygiene before leaving the patient-care environment.
- After gown removal, ensure that clothing and skin do not contact potentially contaminated environmental surfaces that could result in possible transfer of microorganism to other patients or environmental surfaces.

APIC⁴

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) Standard Precautions:

Wear a gown to protect skin and to prevent soiling of clothing during procedures and patient-care activities that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions. Select a gown that is appropriate for the activity and amount of fluid likely to be encountered. Remove a soiled gown as promptly as possible, and wash hands to avoid transfer of microorganisms to other patients or environments.

APIC Contact Precautions:

In addition to wearing a gown as outlined under Standard Precautions, wear a gown when entering the room if you anticipate that your clothing will have substantial contact with the patient, environmental surfaces, or items in the patient's room, or if the patient is incontinent or has diarrhea, an ileostomy, a colostomy, or wound drainage not contained by a dressing. Remove the gown before leaving the patient's environment. After gown removal, ensure that clothing does not contact potentially contaminated environmental surfaces to avoid transfer of microorganisms to other patients or environments.

AAMI⁵

Only the Association for the Advancement of Medical Instrumentation (AAMI) offers a widely accepted system of classification for protective apparel based on liquid barrier performance.

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
AAMI Level / Performance Requirements at 4% AQL	Spray Impact Penetration ≤ 4.5g	Spray Impact Penetration ≤ 1.0g Hydrostatic Pressure ≥ 20cm	Spray Impact Penetration ≤ 1.0g Hydrostatic Pressure ≥ 50cm
Anticipated Risk of Exposure to Fluid	Low	Between Low and Moderate	Moderate
Gown Characteristics (Weight)	Light-weight SMS fabric	Medium-weight SMS fabric	Heavy-weight SMS fabric
Recommended Areas of Use[†]	Med/Surg Laundry Housekeeping	ICU Med/Surg Dialysis Nursery Lab Pathology Laboratories Hyperbaric	ER Trauma Burn Units Critical Care Units
Recommended Tasks[†]	Transporting Patients Basic Patient Care	Blood Draw Suturing Inserting I.V. Lines	Drawing Arterial Blood Inserting I.V. Lines

[†]Recommended areas and tasks are based on feedback from a research panel of 300 Registered Nurses, Infection Control Practitioners, and Materials Managers. Ultimately, the health care personnel using these gowns must make the final decision on which level of protection is appropriate, given the anticipated risk of fluid exposure.

1. http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=DIRECTIVES&p_id=2570#XIII
2. http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_isolation_standard.html
3. http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/gl_isolation_contact.html
4. Siegel JD, Rhinehart E, Jackson M, Chiarello L, and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee, 2007 Guideline for Isolation Precautions: Preventing Transmission of Infectious Agents in Healthcare Settings, June 2007 P.49-53
5. <http://marketplace.aami.org/eseries/scriptcontent/docs/Preview%20Files/pb700310preview.pdf>

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