

Recommendations for personal protective equipment for regional anaesthesia in a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

- ➊ The recommendations below assume that the main route of transmission is through contact and droplet routes, but if there is a change in evidence regarding the route of transmission, a higher level of personal protective equipment should be considered.
- ➋ These recommendations also assume that the patient is advised to wear a surgical facemask at all times during regional anaesthesia procedure and surgery.
- ➌ Use a higher level of personal protective equipment in case of uncertainty in oxygen requirement, duration of close contact or block success.
- ➍ Always have respirator masks available, as the intra-operative course may vary during the case.

LEVELS OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT*

➊ **Contact precautions:** Fluid resistant gowns + gloves

➋ **Droplet precautions:** Fluid resistant gowns + gloves + face shield/goggles + fluid-resistant face mask

➌ **Airborne precautions:** Fluid resistant gown + gloves + face shield/goggles + respirator mask (N95 or FFP2/FFP3)/ PAPR

RECOMMENDATIONS

Pre-operative assessment	Droplet precautions	
Head and neck blocks	Droplet precautions	Consider airborne precautions
Upper limb block	Droplet precautions	Consider airborne precautions
Lower limb block	Droplet precautions	
Central neuraxial block	Droplet precautions	
Intra-operative monitoring	Droplet precautions Healthcare professionals should attempt to maintain a 2 m distance from the patient if possible.	
	Consider airborne precautions if: The patient is unable to wear a surgical facemask Significant risk of intra-operative conversion to general anaesthesia Surgical procedure could be aerosol-generating	
Oxygen therapy	Droplet precautions if oxygen flow < 5 l.min ⁻¹ and the patient is wearing a facemask.	
	Airborne precautions if high-flow oxygen is used	
Equipment protection and decontamination	Cover the ultrasound machines with transparent plastic drapes which can be safely removed. Wipe the ultrasound machine after removing the covers. Allow time for the disinfectant to dry.	

PPE, personal protective equipment; PAPR, powered air-purifying respirator.

*Inconsistency of nomenclature with regards to the level of PPE in literature. Commonly used terminology: level-1 PPE = contact precautions, level-2 PPE = droplet precautions and level-3 PPE = airborne precautions.