7-04/010.00 Spit Masks

The Department has approved the use of spit masks to reduce the risk of the wearer transmitting fluids (saliva, mucus, and blood) from the facial area through spitting, sneezing, or coughing. Spit masks shall only be used in instances where there is a reasonable belief that the inmate poses a threat of transmitting bodily fluids, actively spitting, biting, and/or threatening to spit by words or actions.

The decision to use a spit mask should not be taken lightly as improper use may cause injury or death, including asphyxiation, suffocation, or drowning in one's own fluids. Personnel shall not use a spit mask as a form of retaliation or punishment. Spit masks are for one-time use only and are considered a biohazard after use. Spit masks shall be disposed of in approved biohazard receptacles after use.

Conditions for Using the Spit Mask

When a spit mask is used, personnel shall ensure the following:

- The wearer shall be restrained before applying a spit mask.
- Personnel shall make an attempt to remove any jewelry and eyewear from the wearer before application (if safe).
- Personnel should avoid spraying the wearer with chemical agents while the spit mask is applied.
- Circumstances permitting, attempt to video record the spit mask’s application and video record the wearer wearing the spit mask.
- Circumstances permitting, request a supervisor before application of the spit mask.
- The wearer shall remain under constant, close supervision while wearing the spit mask and be continuously monitored in person for signs of medical or mental distress.
- The wearer shall never be left unattended.

Spit masks shall **not** be used under the following circumstances:

- If the inmate is vomiting, having difficulty breathing, or is bleeding profusely from the mouth or nose area.
    - If personnel observe the wearer experiencing difficulty breathing, vomiting, or if the wearer begins to bleed profusely from the mouth or nose after the application of the spit mask, the spit mask shall be immediately removed, and personnel shall request medical assistance.
- If there is difficulty applying the spit mask due to head size.