



PRESS RELEASE—CONTACT DPS NEWSROOM AT (608) 266-6795

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Department of Safety and Professional Services Releases PPE Training Modules for Police, Wastewater Works and Other Public Sector Employees

MADISON, Wis. – In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency and to help ensure the optimal use of valuable personal protective equipment, the Department of Safety and Professional Services has developed training modules for public employees who do not routinely use PPE in their work. The three modules include a [general education course on N95 respirator use](#) along with [one tailored to law enforcement](#) and [another for water treatment workers](#). They are available on the agency's website.

The unprecedented COVID-19 crisis is driving more first-responders and other employees maintaining critical infrastructure to use personal protective equipment at work on a regular basis. Their counterparts in health care can attest that proper usage of PPE is critical for it to confer benefit and keep wearers safe from infection. Yet not everyone looking to PPE for safety knows how to use it correctly. And if someone uses PPE incorrectly, they put themselves at greater risk of catching COVID-19, and they have wasted a valuable resource.

“What a lot of people don't realize with PPE is that if you don't wear it properly, it doesn't protect you, and if you don't take it off properly, it can contaminate you,” said Ann Jurkowski, one of two DPS employees who developed the modules.

Jurkowski is a certified industrial hygienist with a master's degree in public health and more than twenty years of experience in the field. As this public health emergency unfolded, she quickly realized a lot of people would be using PPE without much, if any, experience or training. Yet she also knew that the in-person trainings she had done in the past were not an option with COVID-19, a disease so easily transmitted that Gov. Tony Evers issued a Safer at Home order with strict social distancing recommendations to limit close human interaction.

When Fond du Lac Police Department Lieutenant Anthony Hahn reached out for training assistance, Jurkowski decided to offer training modules that public entities could deliver on their own. She partnered with Jane Dienger, a DPS occupational safety inspector with a master's degree in safety and twenty years of experience, to develop instructional modules for police departments, water treatment facilities and other public employers to use for staff who were new to PPE or who might need a refresher.

Lt. Hahn says the training module is invaluable right now, as maintaining staff health and safety is paramount to every decision and action in the department. “We want to make sure our staff is using best practices for the COVID-19 health situation,” Hahn said. “We have used PPE in the past, the but COVID-19 situation is taking this type of training to the forefront...This will make a difference to our department, as it will provide for safe work procedures and guidelines.”

DSPS Secretary-designee Dawn Crim says promoting safety is always the core responsibility of the agency, but that role is certainly heightened now.

“I am proud of Ann and Jane for assessing a need and developing a solution so quickly,” Crim said. “We expect these training modules to be widely used. They will help ensure that public employees must keep working in this crisis can do so safely.”

The Department of Safety and Professional Services issues more than 240 unique licenses, administers more than 100 boards and councils that regulate professions, enforces state building codes, and maintains the Wisconsin Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which is a key tool in the multi-faceted public health campaign to stem excessive opioid prescribing. A fee-based agency, the Department of Safety and Professional Services is self-sustaining and receives no general fund tax dollars for its day-to-day operations. With five offices and 250 employees throughout Wisconsin, DSPS collaborates with constituents and stakeholders across a wide range of industries to promote individual and state economic prosperity.

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