

PROCUREMENT OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

SYNOPSIS

The global COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented shortage in personal protective equipment (PPE) and other medical supplies. To support the needs of Canada's frontline healthcare response, the Government of Canada, in coordination with the provinces and territories, launched a significant bulk procurement, engaging a diverse number of new suppliers and manufacturers both internationally and through the Government of Canada's domestic "Call to Action" to increase domestic production.

SOMMAIRE

La pandémie mondiale de COVID-19 a entraîné une pénurie sans précédent d'équipement de protection individuelle (EPI) et d'autres fournitures médicales. Pour répondre aux besoins liés à l'intervention des travailleurs de la santé de première ligne du pays, le gouvernement du Canada, en collaboration avec les provinces et les territoires, a lancé un important processus d'acquisition en grande quantité en mobilisant un certain nombre de nouveaux fournisseurs et fabricants, tant à l'étranger qu'au pays dans le cadre de son « appel à l'action » visant à accroître la production nationale.

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the Government of Canada doing to address shortages of PPE and other medical supplies?
- How is the Public Health Agency of Canada equipping frontline healthcare workers with the PPE required to protect their health and mitigate the spread of COVID-19?

QUESTIONS POTENTIELLES

- Quelles sont les mesures prises par le gouvernement du Canada pour pallier la pénurie d'EPI et d'autres fournitures médicales?
- De quelle manière l'Agence de santé publique du Canada fournit-elle aux travailleurs de la santé de première ligne l'EPI dont ils ont besoin pour protéger leur santé et empêcher la propagation de la COVID-19?

KEY MESSAGES

- The Government of Canada is continuously working to secure critical personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies and medical equipment, and to expedite delivery of supplies to our frontline healthcare workers.
- Canada is receiving PPE shipments, and is working rapidly to allocate the supplies to the provinces and territories as per an approach agreed upon by federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of Health.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada is also deploying PPE and ventilators from its National Emergency Strategic Stockpile in response to urgent requests for assistance from provinces and territories.
- In addition, the Government of Canada is also receiving offers of donations from international and domestic organizations.

MESSAGES CLÉS

- Le gouvernement du Canada travaille sans relâche en vue d'obtenir l'EPI et le matériel médical essentiels et d'accélérer la livraison des fournitures aux travailleurs de la santé de première ligne.
- Le Canada reçoit des cargaisons d'EPI et travaille rapidement pour acheminer les fournitures aux provinces et aux territoires selon une approche convenue par les ministres de la Santé du fédéral, des provinces et des territoires.
- L'Agence de santé publique du Canada achemine également de l'EPI et des ventilateurs provenant de la Réserve nationale stratégique d'urgence afin de répondre aux demandes urgentes d'assistance des provinces et des territoires.
- De plus, le gouvernement du Canada reçoit aussi des offres de dons d'organisations nationales et internationales.

IF PRESSED ON HOW THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS ADDRESSING THE GLOBAL SHORTAGE OF PPE SUPPLIES

- The Government of Canada, through the leadership of Public Services and Procurement Canada, and Innovation Science and Economic Development Canada, has galvanized Canadian industry to increase domestic manufacturing capacity, including re-tooling facilities to produce PPE and medical equipment and supplies, including ventilators and rapid testing kits.
- Public Services and Procurement Canada has confirmed contracts for a variety of PPE and other medical supplies including over 141 million N95 respirators and equivalents (e.g., KN95 respirators; FFP2), 340 million surgical masks, 126 million protective gowns, and 40 thousand ventilators.

- The Public Health Agency of Canada is receiving staggered delivery of shipments, and to date, has allocated approximately 3.5 million N95 respirators and equivalents (e.g., KN95 respirators; FFP2), 109.7 million surgical masks, 49.7 million pairs of nitrile gloves, 17.2 million face shields, and 4.1 million protective gowns to provinces and territories, and more is expected to arrive and be distributed in the coming days.
- Additionally, the Public Health Agency of Canada has also distributed to provinces and territories donations of over 593 thousand N95 and equivalent respirators, 1.6 million surgical masks, 420 thousand pairs of gloves, 60 thousand protective gowns, and 80 thousand face shields.

SI ON INSISTE POUR SAVOIR COMMENT LE GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA ENTEND PALLIER LA PÉNURIE MONDIALE D'EPI

- Grâce au leadership de Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada et d'Innovation, Sciences et Développement économique Canada, le gouvernement du Canada a mobilisé l'industrie canadienne afin qu'elle augmente la capacité de fabrication au pays, notamment grâce au réoutillage des installations afin d'y produire de l'EPI et des fournitures et équipements médicaux, comme des ventilateurs et des trousse de test rapide.
- Services publics et Approvisionnement Canada a confirmé la signature de contrats en vue d'acquérir une panoplie d'EPI et d'autres fournitures médicales, notamment plus de 141 millions de respirateurs N95 et de respirateurs équivalents (p. ex. des respirateurs KN95; FFP2), 340 millions de masques chirurgicaux, 126 millions de blouses de protection et 40 000 ventilateurs.
- L'ASPC reçoit des expéditions de façon échelonnée, et, à ce jour, elle a acheminé environ 3,5 millions de respirateurs N95 et de respirateurs équivalents (p. ex. des respirateurs KN95;

FFP2), 109,7 millions de masques chirurgicaux, 49,7 millions de paires de gants doublés de nitrile, 17,2 millions d'écrans faciaux et 4,1 millions de blouses de protection aux provinces et aux territoires. D'autres expéditions de fournitures devraient arriver au pays et être distribuées au cours des prochains jours.

- De plus, l'ASPC a également remis aux provinces et aux territoires plus de 593 000 respirateurs N95 et masques équivalents, 1,6 millions masques chirurgicaux, 420 000 paires de gants, 60 000 blouses de protection, et 80 000 d'écrans faciaux qui lui ont été donnés.

IF PRESSED ON HOW THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS ENSURING THE QUALITY OF PPE SUPPLIES

- Due to intense global competition for PPE and other medical supplies, countries have needed to engage with a diverse number of new suppliers and manufacturers.
- As a result, PPE and medical supplies received by the Public Health Agency of Canada, whether procured internationally or domestically, are verified to meet the technical specifications for healthcare settings for COVID-19 prior to distribution to provinces and territories. The process is the same for donations.
- For example, a KN95 respirator undergoes visual inspection to verify for defects in design and construction, and is tested to confirm performance expectations. Surgical masks undergo a fluid resistance test.
- Supplies that do not meet specifications are subsequently assessed for potential use in non-healthcare settings.
- To date, a large majority of the products received by the Government of Canada have met the technical specifications

for healthcare settings for COVID-19 response; however, as a result the Public Health Agency of Canada's stringent review process, approximately 10 million KN95 respirators were assessed as not meeting the technical specifications.

SI ON INSISTE POUR SAVOIR COMMENT LE GOUVERNEMENT DU CANADA ASSURE LA QUALITÉ DE L'EPI

- En raison de l'intense concurrence mondiale pour l'achat d'EPI et d'autres fournitures médicales, les pays ont dû mobiliser un certain nombre de nouveaux fournisseurs et fabricants.
- Par conséquent, l'EPI et les fournitures médicales reçus par l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada, qu'ils aient été achetés à l'étranger ou au pays, font l'objet d'une vérification afin de confirmer qu'ils satisfont aux spécifications techniques prévues pour les établissements de soins de santé relatives à la COVID-19 avant d'être distribués aux provinces et aux territoires. Le processus est le même pour les dons.
- Par exemple, un masque KN95 fait l'objet d'une inspection visuelle pour détecter tout défaut de conception et de fabrication et il est testé pour confirmer qu'il répond aux attentes en matière de rendement. Les masques chirurgicaux sont soumis à un test de résistance aux fluides.
- Les fournitures qui ne répondent pas aux spécifications sont ensuite évaluées pour déterminer si elles peuvent être utilisées dans des établissements où des soins de santé ne sont pas offerts.
- À ce jour, la grande majorité des produits qu'a reçus le gouvernement du Canada respectent les spécifications techniques prévues pour les établissements de soins de santé en vue de l'intervention à la COVID-19 ; cependant, en raison du processus d'examen rigoureux de l'Agence de la

santé publique du Canada, environ 10 millions de respirateurs KN95 ont été jugés non conformes aux spécifications techniques.

IF PRESSED ON ACCEPTING AND DISTRIBUTING PPE LABELLED FOR NON-MEDICAL USE

- The Government of China has implemented a number of export controls aimed at addressing quality control of exported products.
- All PPE supplies that are distributed by Public Health Agency of Canada to provinces and territories are confirmed to meet the Government of Canada's technical specifications for healthcare settings and are labelled as such.

SI ON INSISTE SUR LA QUESTION DE L'ACCEPTATION ET DE LA DISTRIBUTION D'EPI ÉTIQUETÉS À DES FINS NON MÉDICALES

- Le gouvernement chinois a mis en œuvre un certain nombre de mesures de contrôle des exportations qui visent à résoudre les enjeux de contrôle de la qualité des produits exportés.
- Toutes les fournitures d'EPI qui sont distribuées par l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada aux provinces et aux territoires respectent les spécifications techniques du gouvernement du Canada pour les milieux de soins de santé et sont étiquetées comme telles.

BACKGROUND

To address the procurement and distribution needs in support of frontline health care response to COVID-19, the Government of Canada deployed a multi-pronged approach of interdepartmental coordination that includes the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Health Canada, National Research Council (NRC), Global Affairs Canada, the Department of National Defense, Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED).

Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Bulk Procurement

ISED and PSPC continue to galvanize Canadian industries to increase domestic manufacturing capacity, including re-tooling facilities to produce equipment and supplies including portable ventilators, surgical masks, and rapid testing kits.

Throughout this process, PHAC, Health Canada and the NRC are playing a critical role, conducting technical reviews to verify that the products meet the Government of Canada technical specifications for COVID-19 as available on the PSPC's buy and sell website.

Urgent need is further facilitated by Health Canada, expediting regulatory approvals of product reviews and licenses through the Interim Order for Medical Devices signed by the Minister of Health on March 18, 2020. As the regulatory authority, Health Canada also continues to monitor the safety, quality, and efficacy of all medical devices for use in the diagnosis, treatment, mitigation and prevention of COVID-19.

Health Canada also continues to actively engage the medical device industry as well as provinces and territories to monitor for any signals of supply disruptions in Canada. Manufacturers and importers are also now required to notify the Minister of Health of medical device shortages of devices considered critical. Health Canada is closely monitoring the supply of any potential treatments for COVID-19 and working with companies to help ensure continued supply in Canada.

PPE Testing and Quality Assessments

Sourcing PPE from new suppliers (both domestically and abroad) is challenging. Once products are delivered to PHAC they must undergo quality verification before distribution to provinces and territories (P/Ts). This process is supported by testing capacity within the NRC.

Test results are also used to inform future procurements. PSPC and PHAC work with suppliers to address issues at the source or avoid purchasing from unreliable suppliers in the future once issues are identified.

Government of China Export Controls

In response to international criticism concerning the quality of PPE, the Government of China has imposed more stringent certification and export controls for masks and other personal protective equipment (PPE). As a result, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), as an importer, is now required to sign a joint declaration with the exporter attesting that the products meet the standards and certification requirements of the destination country.

For products that are not certified as medical devices in China, the joint declaration will also stipulate that the item is "not for medical use" even if it meets Canada's technical specifications for healthcare settings. These products are subsequently labelled in Simplified Chinese as "not for medical use" both on the outer shipping boxes and inside each of the individual product package.

As noted above, all supplies procured internationally continue to undergo quality verification by PHAC prior to distribution to P/Ts. To maintain the integrity of the PPE packaging, PHAC will be labelling the outer shipping boxes, confirming quality and stating that it is suitable for use in healthcare settings. PHAC will not be removing labels inserted inside each of the individual product boxes, as the process of removing these inserts in Simplified Chinese would cause significant delays in the distribution.

KN95 Respirators

On May 8, CBC reported that of the approximately 11 million KN95 respirators received by the Government of Canada and sourced by a Montreal-based supplier out of China, 8

million did not meet the Government of Canada's technical specifications for healthcare settings for COVID-19 response, 1 million met specifications, and 1.6 million were pending testing results. The number not meeting specifications has since increased to approximately 10 million. PSPC has suspended shipments from this supplier and is pursuing the appropriate recourse on behalf of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

F/P/T Allocation and Distribution

As agreed to by F/P/T Ministers of Health, PHAC is allocating procured PPE using an 80/20 formula: 80% is distributed to P/Ts on a per capita basis and the remaining 20% replenishes the inventory of the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS), including a 2% allocation to Indigenous Services Canada. The purpose of the NESS is to provide surge capacity to P/Ts when their own resources are not sufficient.

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