

COVID-19

Consolidated Supply Management

General Guidance and Anticipated Questions

The State of North Carolina is committed to providing a safe workplace for its employees when it is determined that employees must return to work. The State is also aware of the worldwide shortage of PPE items that are needed to ensure our healthcare workers are safe while providing critical care to patients in hospitals, institutions and congregant facilities. In most cases, customer-facing employees and healthcare workers need many of the same safety items.

Because we are one North Carolina jointly committed to flattening the COVID-19 curve, we must work together to ensure everyone has the necessary equipment to effectively perform their jobs. We must also honor the principles of supply, demand, and competition and their effects on prices. North Carolina cannot afford to compete against itself for needed items, thereby driving up the price that each Agency would pay.

To eliminate internal competition and reduce the strain on our healthcare and congregant facilities, the State has consolidated the supply of many common safety items.

1. What does it mean to “consolidate the supply”?

To “consolidate the supply” means that one entity will place all orders for COVID-19 related safety equipment and distribute those items when requested by the agencies.

2. Which entity is responsible for the consolidated supply?

The Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Emergency Management (EM), and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) are working together to consolidate the PPE supply for North Carolina. DHHS and EM have assumed responsibility for PPE supply for long-term health care and congregant facilities, and some public health facilities. Within the Department of Administration, the Division of Purchase and Contract (P&C) has been identified as the entity responsible for Agency employee PPE orders.

3. How does P&C know what my agency needs?

P&C will ask each agency what it needs. P&C has prepared a survey that will be distributed to each agency HR Office. The HR Office will gather the information that DHHS and EM will use to make initial (back to work) quantity projections. On the same survey, the HR Office will gather 60-day projections for PPE. These projections will be used to determine P&C’s bulk order quantities.

4. How will the process work?

P&C will place bulk orders with trusted vendors. The orders will be drop shipped to a warehouse. Agency business units will coordinate with the Agency’s Purchasing Office to complete and submit an order form for 30 days of needed items. The Purchasing Office will submit the form to P&C for administrative processing before it is sent to the Mail Service Center for order fulfillment. The Order Form will be on P&C’s website.

5. How will the Agency pay for the items?

Invoices for bulk orders will be paid by OSBM from a COVID-19 fund. Agencies are not required to repay OSBM for items ordered and delivered. Agencies should order only what is needed.

6. Can the Agency order any item from the list?

An Agency can order any item or combination of items from the list; however, the Supply Administrator reserves the right to question the validity of the order. Because of limited supply of critical items, we must ensure the right items are going to the places with the most critical needs.

7. Can an Agency place an order for brand-specific or preferential items not on the list?

Agencies are encouraged to request needed items using the process described above. DHHS and The Division of Emergency Management have approved the list based on CDC and OSHA guidance, and OSBM has approved the consolidated supply approach to manage overall costs.

8. Which Agencies are required to participate in consolidated supply?

All Cabinet Agencies and Council of State Agencies. Upon request, other entities may be allowed to participate.

9. How long will it take to get my order?

Agencies should expect delivery within 2-3 days after the order is placed. The order will be delivered by the Mail Service Center during its regularly scheduled mail pickup/delivery.

10. Who is the Supply Administrator?

Nicole Mathis is P&C's Supply Administrator. She has a team of State Procurement Specialists working with her to source and purchase supplies from selected supply sources. The team has verified stock levels, lead times, and price guarantees to ensure the State receives ordered supplies timely at reasonable prices.

11. What if a Business Unit runs out of supplies before the 30-day reordering point?

If a Business Unit exhausts its 30-day supply in less than 30 days, the Agency Purchasing Agent should submit a replenishment order. The Supply Administrator will follow up to see if the Agency's PPE projections need to be adjusted.

12. How will I verify the delivery is correct?

When the order is placed, the Purchasing Agent, the location contact, and the Supply Administrator will receive a copy of the order via the email address entered on the e-form. Additionally, the shipment will contain a copy of the order. The State will follow normal receiving protocols, i.e., the shipment should be checked immediately, and the delivery notification should be acknowledged electronically within 24 hours of receipt.

13. How can Business Units be assured the products ordered remain uncontaminated until they reach their destination?

Products will be delivered to Business Units in their original factory wrapping. The Mail Service Center will not break packages to deliver exact quantities.

Example #1: A Business Unit orders twenty-seven (27) masks that are packaged in batches of thirty (30); the Business Unit will receive the entire batch of 30.

Example #2: A Business Unit orders five 12-ounce bottle of hand sanitizer that are packaged individually. The Business Unit will receive five bottles of hand sanitizer.

Example #3: A Business Unit orders thirty-one (31) gloves that are packaged in boxes of 30. The Business Unit will receive one box of 30 gloves.