



**Paper Title:** Essential Technical Specification Thumb Loop and Sleeveless Aprons

**Agenda item:** 2: Thumb-looped aprons Essential Specifications

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**Reference Date:** 20/08/20

**Urgency:** Urgent (decision needed this week)

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### Summary:

The DMC are asked to agree:

- a) that thumb loop and sleeveless aprons need to be put into Table 2 of the Essential Technical Specifications (ETS) but clearly referenced under the use of apron.
- b) the draft ETS for both thumb loop aprons and sleeveless aprons as attached.

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### Background

A working group was recently set up as an action point from the DMC meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 in order to collaborate and find an agreement on Essential Specifications for gowns (including thumb-looped gowns).

### View of regulator

The outcome of that working group is summarised below:

1. HSE and OPSS agree that aprons (both thumb loop and sleeveless) are PPE and therefore need to be CE marked against the PPE Regulation (Note: the aprons purchased by NHS Supply Chain as BAU are CE marked and stated to be Cat I).

2. The separate technical spec originally agreed for aprons stated that they were not PPE – this is incorrect if applying the PPE Regulation and the PPE at Work Regulations. (Note: The argument that resulted in this decision by DMC centred around them not being Cat III PPE and their use to preserve underlying PPE.)
3. The 4 nations IPC COVID-19 guidance does not specify thumb loop aprons, just aprons. The DMC heard that some Trusts are using thumb loop aprons as long sleeve fluid repellent gowns for other non-COVID tasks outside of scarcity situations.
4. Subsequently HSE set up a working group to draw up an essential spec for a thumb loop apron which would be considered equivalent to a long-sleeved fluid repellent gown for COVID-19 use according to the 4 nations IPC guidance and a draft specification was drawn up for comment. However, discussion in the working group and subsequent findings indicated that all of the polythene thumb loop aprons purchased under BAU are open backed and therefore would not meet the coverage criteria for a long sleeve fluid repellent gown.

## **Recommendation**

The DMC are asked to agree the following recommendations based on the information above:

- a. that thumb loop and sleeveless aprons need to be put into Table 2 of the ETS but clearly referenced under the use of apron.
- b. the draft ETS for both thumb loop aprons and sleeveless aprons as attached. Please note a previous draft been agreed by DMC (amends/additions are in red), the sleeveless apron specification is based on the existing aprons specification which has been reviewed by the head of aprons and amended accordingly. The thumb loop spec is based on existing lines purchased by NHS supply chain and this approach was agreed by the working group (see Appendix 1. Draft Essential Technical Specification Thumb Loop and Sleeveless Aprons V1 20 Aug 20)

## **Appendix**

1. Draft Essential Technical Specification Thumb Loop and Sleeveless Aprons V1 20 Aug 20.docx