



General IPC Measures during Ebola and Marburg Disease Outbreaks



18 June 2026
NATIONAL IPC WEBINAR



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



INTRODUCTION

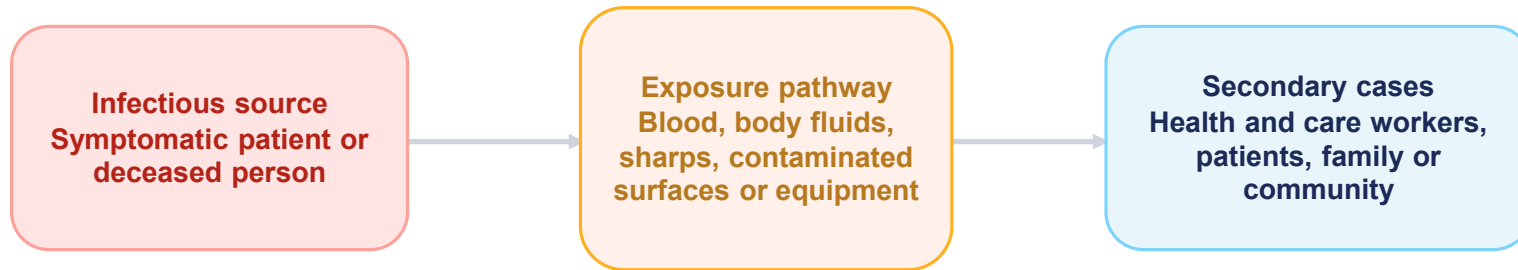


- IPC protocols are the first line of defense in preventing the spread of these diseases in healthcare facilities and in the community
- Given the high fatality rates of Ebola, protecting healthcare workers with appropriate IPC measures is crucial to maintain a functional healthcare workforce during outbreaks
- Robust IPC measures can help to maintain public confidence in the healthcare system's ability to safely manage and contain the outbreak
- Core elements of IPC include the implementation of **standard and transmission-based precautions**
- During an infectious disease outbreak, the focus is often on availability and use of PPE. Although important, PPE is at the **bottom of the hierarchy of controls**.

Why IPC matters in Ebola and Marburg outbreaks



Filovirus transmission can be amplified when care pathways are delayed, crowded or poorly controlled.



IPC breaks the chain by rapidly identifying suspected cases, separating exposure risks and making care safe.

Operational implication: every entry point must be able to screen, triage, isolate and notify without delay.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.

The role of IPC: outbreak control and safe routine care



IPC is both an emergency-response pillar and a routine quality-of-care function.

ROUTINE SERVICE DELIVERY

- standard precautions
- hand hygiene and WASH
- routine cleaning and waste systems
- IPC training, monitoring and feedback
- supplies and occupational safety



OUTBREAK RESPONSE

- rapid screening and source control
- triage and patient placement
- IPC ring support and decontamination
- PPE selection, donning and doffing
- safe continuity of essential services

Cross-cutting collaboration: clinical care • surveillance • WASH • logistics • RCCE

Routine IPC capacity is what enables rapid, safe outbreak operations.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



USE THE HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS BEFORE RELYING ON PPE



PPE is essential, but it is the last barrier. Start by reducing the exposure at source.

1. Source control
screen early, isolate promptly, restrict exposure

2. Engineering controls
single rooms, barriers, flow, WASH, toilets

3. Administrative controls
SOPs, training, staffing, visitor policy, monitoring

4. PPE
correct selection, use, removal and disposal

Last barrier

What this means operationally

When Ebola or Marburg disease is suspected, do not start by asking “what PPE do we need?” Start with: where will people enter, who will screen, where will the patient be separated, how will staff move safely, and how will supplies be sustained?

Engineering + administrative controls make PPE safer and more effective.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



WHO RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE



The general IPC package is built around four operational decisions.

1

Use the IPC ring approach

Rapid, intensive IPC support in health-care facilities and communities around cases.

Conditional recommendation

3

Triage suspected cases

Determine severity, identify immediate care needs and prioritize care delivery.

Good practice statement

2

Screen at first contact

Screen patients, visitors and health workers using a no-touch technique in areas of circulation.

Good practice statement

4

Isolate suspected/confirmed cases

Single-patient room preferred; do not mix suspected and confirmed patients.

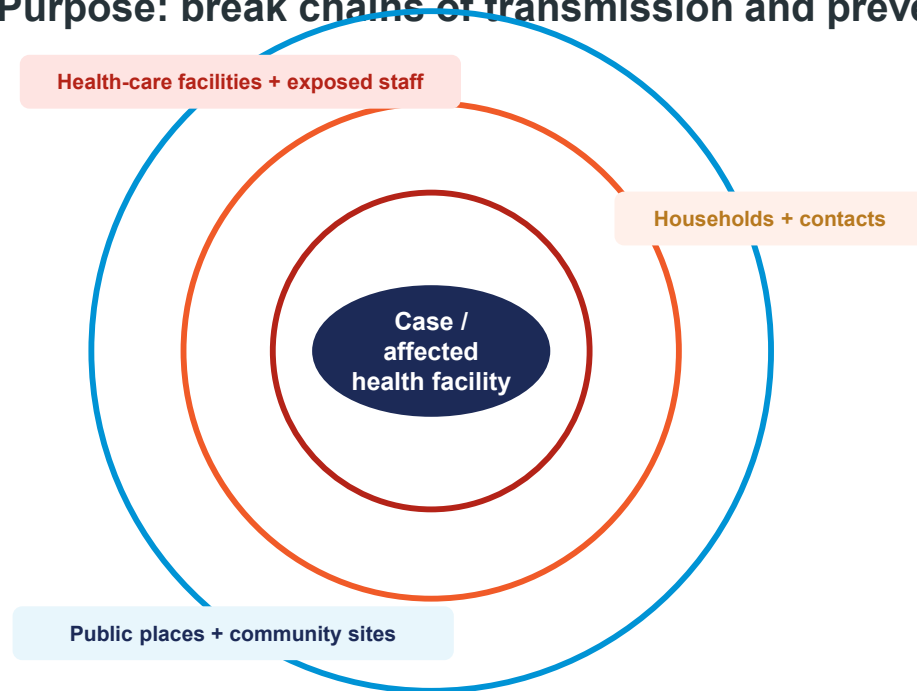
Good practice statement

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.

IPC ring approach: rapid, localized support around risk



Purpose: break chains of transmission and prevent health-care-associated infections.



When to activate

As soon as a case is identified or a facility/high-risk area is linked to active transmission. The target is rapid activation and implementation.

What the ring provides

Decontamination, rapid IPC assessment, improvement plan, IPC/WASH kits, staff briefings, exposure-risk assessment and supportive supervision.

The ring approach supplements routine IPC support; it should not replace longer-term IPC strengthening.

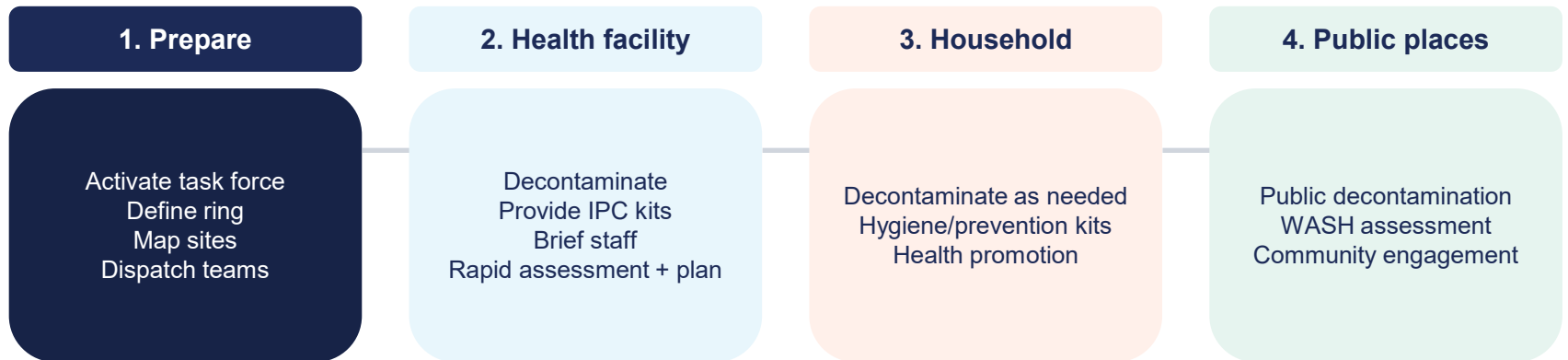
Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



IPC RING APPROACH: FOUR STEPS



Plan the ring as a bundled intervention, not as a single decontamination visit.



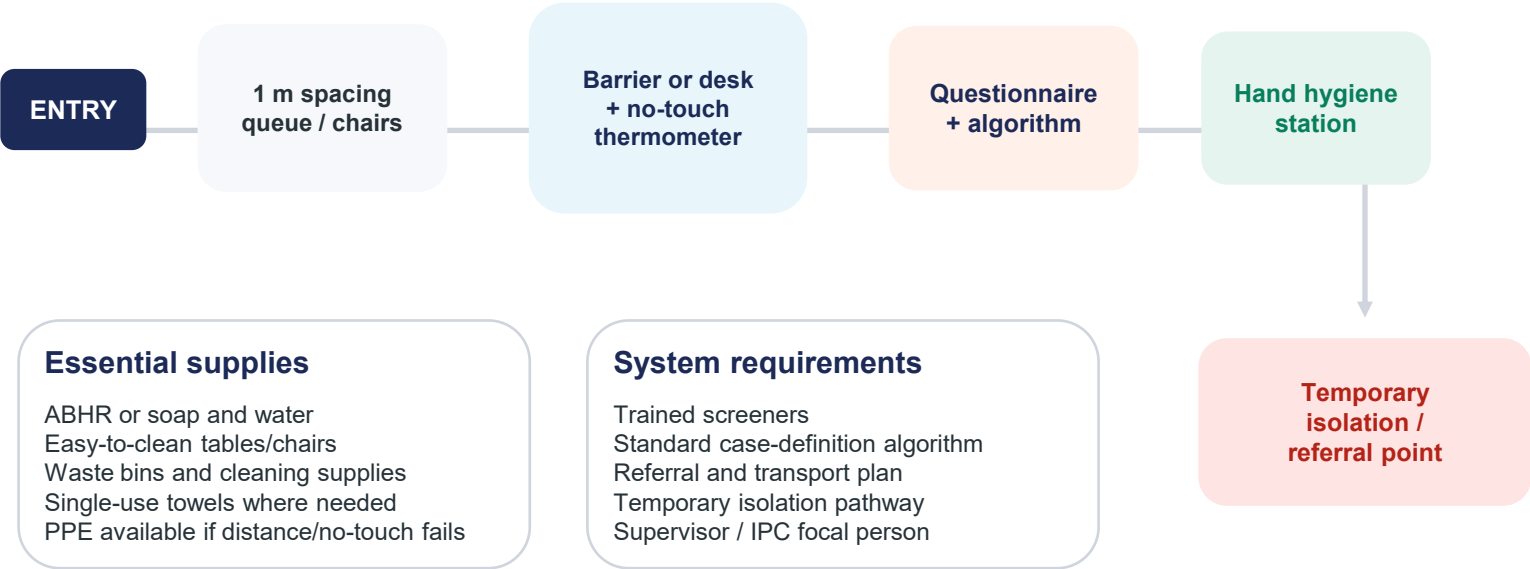
Timing target: initiate IPC ring activities within 24 hours after recognizing that a facility provided care to a case. If a case is confirmed, decontamination should be the first intervention.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.

SCREENING AREA SETUP: DESIGN FOR DISTANCE AND FLOW



The physical layout should prevent crowding, minimize touch and enable immediate referral/isolation.



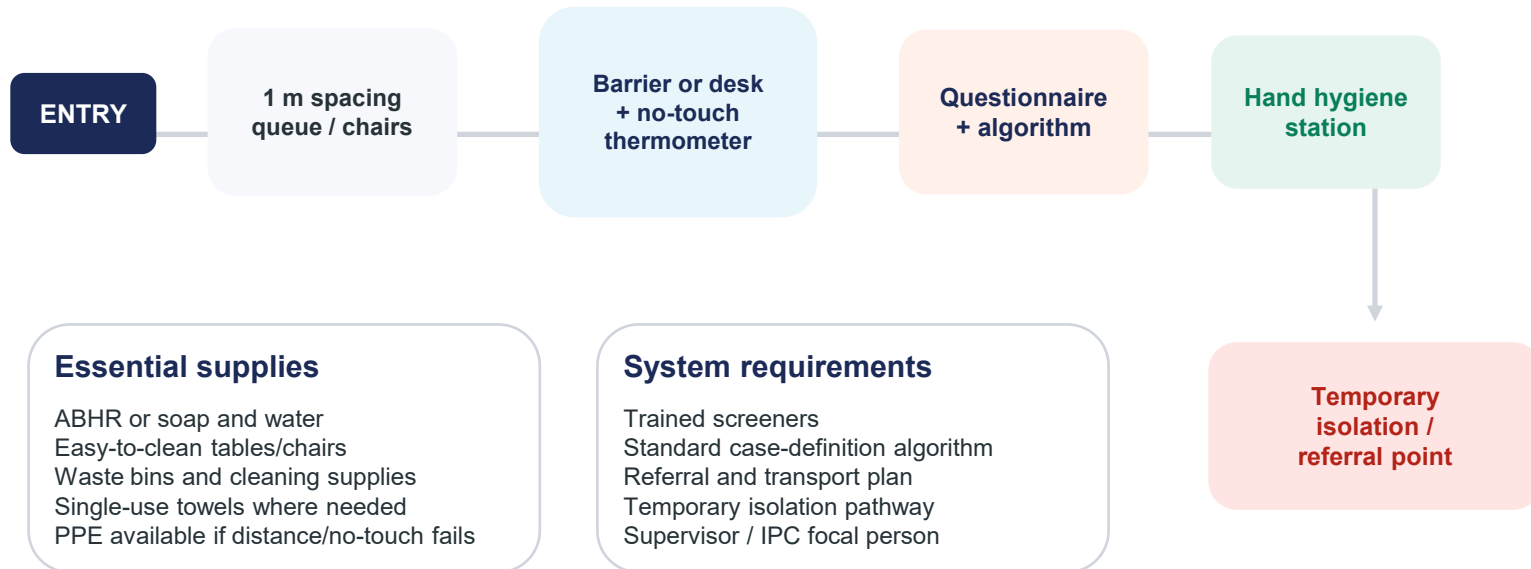
Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



SCREENING AREA SETUP: DESIGN FOR DISTANCE AND FLOW



The physical layout should prevent crowding, minimize touch and enable immediate referral/isolation.



Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.

TRIAGE: PRIORITIZE SAFE, TIME-SENSITIVE CARE



Screening asks “could this be Ebola or Marburg?” Triage asks “how sick is this patient and what care is needed now?”

Who should be triaged?

All patients suspected of having Ebola or Marburg disease — including those presenting for surgery, obstetrics or other invasive procedures.

What should triage determine?

Severity of illness, immediate clinical needs, priority for care delivery and safe route to isolation, testing, treatment or referral.

Dedicated triage area requirements

- at least 1 metre between beds/assessment areas
- space for safe PPE putting-on and taking-off, with a buddy when removing PPE
- hand hygiene stations and cleanable equipment
- bins with lids and sharps containers

Screening and triage may be combined in small facilities or separated in larger facilities — but the route to isolation must be clear.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.

Patient placement: isolate, separate and control flow



Single-patient room is preferred. Do not cohort suspected patients with confirmed patients.



Isolation area essentials

- clear signage and restricted access
- separate entry/exit where design allows
- dedicated toilet, waste bins and sharps container
- hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection supplies
- space for safe PPE putting-on and taking-off

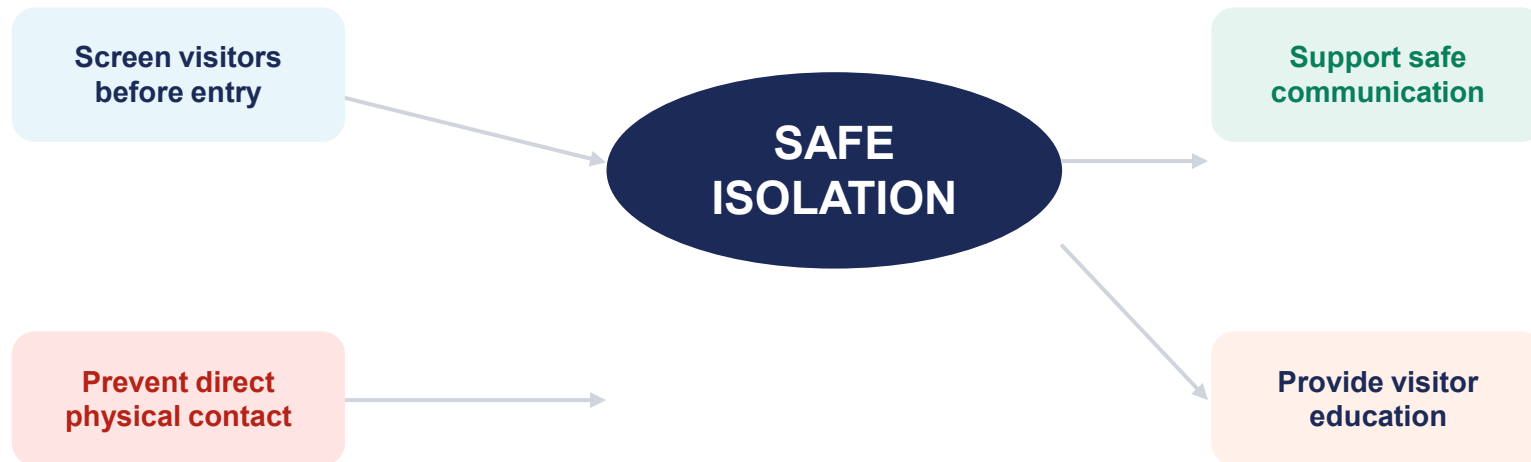
Move people and equipment from clean → dirty, not back through the clean route.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.

ISOLATION MUST BE SAFE, DIGNIFIED AND HUMANE



Public health protection and patient well-being should be planned together.



Special considerations

Children, pregnant women and close-contact family members may require tailored arrangements that preserve safety, development, trust and care continuity.

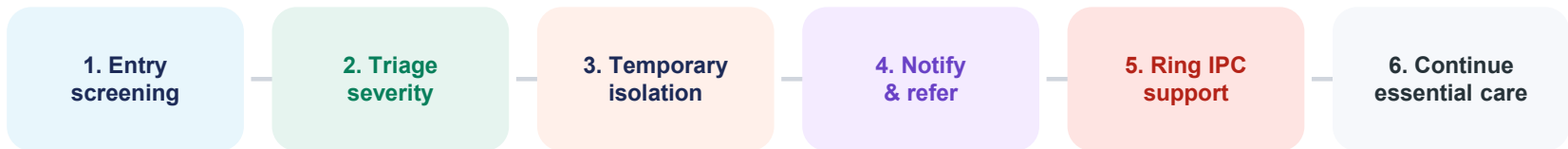
Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



FACILITY WORKFLOW: IDENTIFY → PROTECT → ISOLATE → NOTIFY



Assign an IPC focal point to each step so that the pathway works in real time.



IPC checks at each step

- entry point has trained screeners and standard algorithm
- triage area has spacing, hand hygiene, cleanable equipment and waste/sharps containers
- isolation area has dedicated toilet, equipment, signage and safe don/doff space
- staff exposure events are reported, risk-assessed and managed immediately

When these steps are rehearsed, facilities detect cases faster and reduce disruption to routine services.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



ROUTINE IPC IS OUTBREAK READINESS INFRASTRUCTURE



The strongest outbreak response is built before the outbreak starts.

IPC governance
& focal persons

Guidelines, SOPs
& job aids

Education, drills
& mentorship

WASH, hand hygiene
& supplies

Monitoring, audit
& feedback

Exposure reporting
& staff safety

Minimum requirements and IPC core components help facilities plan, organize and sustain the programme.

Practical readiness action: include screening, triage, isolation and IPC ring activation in routine IPC rounds and emergency drills.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



VHF KITS



- Specialized emergency response modules designed for infection prevention, patient isolation and medical testing
- Require trained, specialized medical teams Including the setup of an isolation unit, outreach activities, surveillance, and the management of suspected, confirmed or deceased cases.
- A specialized epidemic response team is required. The opening of an isolation unit requires the order of a complete ISOLATION kit. Renewable supplies necessary for the functioning of the unit must be ordered as quickly as possible.



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



VHF KITS



- **MEDICINES** (including regulated, cold chain and regulated transport medicines): all medicines required for the medical management of patients. Some medicines require cold chain transport (e.g. oxytocin, dexamethasone, etc.)
- **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT:** all equipment necessary for operations within the isolation unit. It contains also a small sterilization module to sterilize the delivery or manual vacuum aspiration set if required inside the structure.
- **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:** calculated to provide two weeks of protection for the entire staff working in the isolation unit, including water and sanitation personnel and logisticians.



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



VHF KITS



- **LOGISTIC and SANITATION** (including regulated transport items): all items required for the installation and daily functioning of the isolation unit by the logistics and water/sanitation teams. Includes the module camp installation and boundary for the isolation unit.
- **SAMPLING:** allows the collection of biological samples. It can be used either inside or outside the isolation unit. When used outside, protective equipment is included in the module.



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



VHF KITS



- **FORMS and STATIONERY:** materials for use inside and outside the isolation unit. A printer module is also included.
- **HEALTH PROMOTION EQUIPMENT:** includes material for health promotion
- **MEDICAL RENEWABLE SUPPLIES:** renewable medical supplies necessary for patient management within the isolation unit.
- NB: The kit also includes the necessary equipment for surveillance teams, (e.g. thermometer).



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



KEY TAKE HOME MESSAGES



- IPC is a response pillar and a routine service safety function.
- Use the hierarchy of controls; PPE is the last barrier, not the whole response.
- Activate the IPC ring rapidly around cases, facilities and community risk sites.
- Screen everyone at first contact using no-touch methods; triage suspected cases for severity.
- Isolate suspected and confirmed cases safely, separately and with dignity.

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.





THANK YOU!!

Source: WHO. Infection prevention and control guideline for Ebola and Marburg diseases.



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA