Guidelines for tracheostomy in the Covid-19 Environment:

Performing tracheostomy is an aerosol generating procedure. Post tracheostomy care is also aerosol generating and creates a potential exposure for healthcare workers caring for patients while they have a tracheostomy.

Elective tracheostomy should not be performed in patients who have tested positive for Covid-19 until they are subsequently tested negative.

Patients who have tested negative for Covid-19 twice, separated by 48 hours or more, may be considered for elective tracheostomy.

Multidisciplinary case review should be conducted prior to performing tracheostomy to ensure that tracheostomy is appropriate in the environment and at the time it is being considered.

Tracheostomy should be performed with precautions for aerosol generating procedures and with the following additional precautions:

- Personnel present should be reduced to those who are essential
- Procedure should be performed by most experienced practitioner
- When possible, transfer of patients through the hospital should be minimized or avoided
- Respirations should be held prior to entering the airway.
- Muscle relaxation should be considered to avoid coughing

Post-tracheostomy should be performed with precautions for aerosol generating procedures and with the following additional precautions:

- Maintenance of airway circuit continuity at all times
- Use of inline suction
- Delay/avoidance of tracheostomy tube change
- Maintaining tracheostomy cuff inflation