



ONTARIO COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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COVID-19 FAQ's for EMS/Fire 3/20/2020

Personal Protective Equipment

- 1) PPE Recommendations
 - a. **Wear gloves on ALL patient encounters.**
 - b. **Wear eye protection on ALL patient encounters.**
 - c. **Wear a surgical mask on ALL patient encounters for any illness (medical) related complaint or anyone with cough, sore throat, fever, fatigue, malaise, not feeling well, etc.**
 - d. **Wear a N95 mask and gown for ANY patient encounter that results in aerosolization such as nebulizer use, CPAP, or intubation.**
 - e. WASH your hands frequently and after every patient encounter.
 - f. Don't touch your face, mouth eyes.

- 2) What do I do with my PPE after patient contact?
 - a. Dispose of PPE in a red biohazard bag.
 - b. Dispose of the biohazard bag when full.
 - c. Do not reuse PPE after taking care of a patient with suspected COVID-19.
 - d. Your clothes do not need to be removed unless soiled with blood/bodily fluids.

- 3) Where can my department get supplies such as PPE (masks, face shields, gowns), hand sanitizer, etc?
 - a. Email the Asset Request form to EOCRequest@co.ontario.ny.us The form is on our EMO Website and attached to this email.
 - b. Your request will be processed and the requestor will be contacted regarding request fulfillment.

Dispatch and Response

- 1) Will all COVID-19 patients be screened by 911?
 - a. Yes. Dispatch is asking questions for Sick Person or Difficulty Breathing calls to see if they could have been in contact with an infected individual. They will advise you with that information.
 - b. Dispatch will say "The EIPS Tool has been used." Call in to dispatch to receive further information regarding that location.

What does EIPS mean?

As you all know, one way that we try to keep emergency responders safe is to identify and flag obvious or potential hazardous addresses and/or persons. This responsibility remains in place with COVID-19 - **HOWEVER**, the way in

which we handle this will be modified to protect the confidentiality of all involved. Public Health will be contacting the 911 Center ONLY with updates and addresses that need to be entered into CAD. The address ONLY will be entered, no name or other information is to be added. The ONLY information that is to be entered in the notes is this exact wording: “Person(s) at this address are under respiratory precautions. All emergency responders are to be advised to use full respiratory precautions”.

What does this mean exactly?

- 1 - It does NOT mean that person(s) at the residence has (have) COVID-19. Even if they do, we are NOT going to be told that by PH.
- 2 – It DOES mean that person(s) at the residence are exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with one or more persons at risk.
- 3 – It DOES mean that **we WILL respect the privacy** of the resident(s) by only relaying the information that we have and not try to find out more!

This information will be relayed to all emergency responders! After doing so if they have any other questions, they need to be told that we have given them all information that we have and to use all available resources (equipment) that they have available to them to best protect themselves. CALL Dispatch via phone to get additional information or clarification on the residence.

- 2) What calls are Non-EMS Fire Departments responding on?
 - a. Non-EMS Fire Departments will be dispatched for **ECHO** level calls and as requested by EMS.
 - b. Additional call types will be restricted as community spread continues.
- 3) I have a patient and need Fire Department resources but they have an illness: can I still call for them?
 - a. Yes. Although we should minimize the number of personnel on scene, if patient care requires additional personnel, they should be requested. Responders must be advised prior to making patient contact to don appropriate PPE.
- 4) What about “riders” in the ambulance?
 - a. Ambulances may not allow family members/others in the cab space of an ambulance.
 - b. Ambulances may consider allowing a family member/other in the patient compartment on a case-by-case basis. In general, only minors should have a family member/care provider in the patient compartment and should have a surgical mask in place regardless of symptoms.
- 5) What about Paramedic and EMT students or explorers riding as an “extra”?
 - a. Hospitals have suspended clinical time as of Sunday March 15. No Ontario County Agencies are accepting students at this time.
 - b. Departments should not allow any observers, explorers, or shadowers.

Assessing and Transporting Patients

- 1) How do I assess patients?
 - a. All patients should be assessed from at least 6 feet away for fever, cough, shortness of breath, generalized illness, or any cold/flu related complaint. If any of these are present, the responder should immediately don a surgical or N95 mask and eye protection along with exam gloves prior to making patient contact. See the guidance sent out by DOH

- b. If available, don a gown. If clinically appropriate, place a surgical mask on the patient and render appropriate care per existing guidelines.
 - c. Make every attempt to minimize the number of responders making direct patient contact with someone with fever and/or signs of an infectious illness.
- 2) What do I do after **EVERY** patient encounter?
- a. After every patient encounter, or after transfer of patient care, doff and properly dispose of PPE.
 - b. Use hand sanitizer prior to getting back into vehicles/apparatus.
 - c. Wash hands when water/soap are available.
 - d. Wipe down all patient care surfaces with disinfectant after each use.
- 3) What is source patient control?
- a. Source patient control refers to placing a surgical mask on a patient with symptoms that could be related to COVID-19, such as cough, sore throat, fever, fatigue, malaise, not feeling well, cold or flu symptoms, etc. This is a critical component of protecting responders and others.
- 4) Where should I transport a potential COVID-19 patient?
- a. Any area hospital is capable of receiving a potential COVID-19 patient. The patient should go to the hospital based upon their preference or specific specialty center needs (eg trauma, cardiac, etc), although Strong West should only receive patients with mild symptoms to help minimize the need for secondary transfer.
- 5) What do I do with a patient I suspect has COVID-19 on hospital arrival?
- a. As above, implement source patient control and don appropriate PPE.
 - b. Patients being transported to area Emergency Departments with fever, cough, or symptoms concerning for infectious illness should have a surgical mask placed prior to reaching EMS Triage.
 - c. Patients with a mask in place can proceed directly to EMS triage. Pre-notify hospital according to existing (Non-COVID-19) procedures.
 - d. Talk with the receiving facility for any potential COVID-19 patient. Follow their directions as to where the patient should be dropped off and moved too.

Exposure Assessment

- 1) What constitutes an exposure to someone with COVID-19?
- a. Close contact, and thus an exposure, is defined as:
 - I. Being with approximately 6 feet of a person confirmed with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (such as caring for or visiting the patient; or sitting within 6 feet of the patient in a room); or
 - II. Having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions of the patient (e.g., being coughed on or touching used tissues with a bare hand).
 - b. Close contact is NOT being more than a few minutes in the patient's room without direct contact with the patient or their secretions/excretions.
- 2) Who makes the determination to quarantine an ambulance/fire crew/law enforcement officer?
- a. The County Public Health Department based on confirmation of exposure to a patient with COVID-19.
- 3) When is the determination made? Is it made in triage when the patient is brought in?

- a. A determination to quarantine is made when a source patient tests positive OR there is specific information that suggests an individual had close contact with a known source patient. This is determined by the County Public Health Department.
- 4) I have been quarantined due to exposure or possible exposure to COVID-19. What happens next?
 - a. Quarantine is being done at home unless you become acutely ill.
 - b. Quarantine is currently 14 days from the time of exposure.
- 5) If a patient is found to have COVID-19, will the department who brought them/had contact be notified?
 - a. Yes, through the County Public Health Department or Emergency Operations Center.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- 1) What steps should I take to disinfect or clean?
 - a. Assure daily cleaning and disinfecting of stations, hard surfaces, bathroom, etc.
 - b. Assure the interiors of all response vehicles are wiped down and cleaned after each shift OR after care for a patient with suspected illness.
 - c. Special attention should be paid to the driver area and all touched surfaces (radio, MDT, light/siren controls, etc.) as well as patient care areas.
 - d. The EPA maintains a list of products effective against COVID-19 at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sar-cov-2>

Meetings and Training

- 1) What should I do for meetings and trainings?
 - a. Cancel or eliminate community outreach programs such as safety courses, fire prevention programs, etc. that engage schools, group homes, high occupancy dwellings, churches, etc.
 - b. Cancel or eliminate banquets, conferences, and meetings with more than 10 attendees.
 - c. Perform only essential training, and when doing so, limit training to small groups whenever possible and follow social distancing guidelines. Keep groups to less than 10 people.
- 2) What about training at the County Safety Training Facility?
 - a. At this time, the County Safety Training Facility is closed till April 15th. This date could be extended. Please check back.

Responder / Employee Health

- 1) What symptoms should my responders be looking for?
 - a. All responders should be self-monitoring for fever, cough, sore throat, or body aches.
 - b. Although it is not required, some departments may choose to have employees check their temperatures prior to duty. Temperatures more than 100.0 F are abnormal and the employee should return home and reassess for additional symptoms.
- 2) If one of my responders is exhibiting symptoms, what do I do?
 - a. Have the responder self-quarantine at home, or if at work, go home.
 - b. Have the responder contact their healthcare provider (personal or through occupational health) for assessment and guidance.
 - c. Do not allow the responder to report for work.

- d. Call your supervisor.
- e. Contact the local Health Department. There is not a centralized assessment program for Public Safety personnel. Further information and resources are available on the CDC website.

Additional Information

- 1) Where can I get the most accurate information regarding COVID-19?
 - a. The CDC is the **single source of Truth** for information related to COVID-19.
 - b. Link to the [CDC COVID-19 site](#)
 - c. Link to the [CDC COVID-19 Guidance for EMS](#) (Guidance for EMS)

Information continues to change. We will continue to keep everyone updated as best we can.