



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

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MEMORANDUM

To: Napa County EMS System	From: Karen Relucio, MD, Public Health Director/Health Officer Zita Konik, MD, EMS Medical Director Shaun Vincent, Interim EMS Administrator
Date: March 24, 2020	Re: COVID-19 Pandemic

As of March 24, 2020

Novel Coronavirus, Pandemic – 2019-2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic **UPDATE 4**

This guidance document is released in cooperation with the Napa County Public Health. The intent is to provide updated guidance and information regarding the management of suspected Novel Coronavirus cases within the Napa County EMS System.

There are four types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate and cause cold symptom and usually mild illness this time of year. However, this is a new (or novel) coronavirus that is causing more severe illness and deaths in some people who have been infected. As of 9 AM PST March 24, 2020, there have been 392,780 cases confirmed worldwide by the health agencies of numerous countries. There have been 17,241 confirmed deaths due to COVID-19. The California EMS Authority (EMSA) has recommended EMS provider agencies and systems access the following link for updates:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

At this time, EMSA recommends using standard airborne, contact, and droplet precautions for anyone with suspected flu-like or respiratory complaint. Napa County EMS and Napa County Public Health support the guidance as appropriate for the EMS System. The following link can be referenced for COVID-19 PPE recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for EMS Personnel: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html#recommended-ppe>

Napa County EMS recognizes that the current “Stay-At-Home” Public Health Order for creates challenges for EMS Personnel and Providers. Napa County EMS, in collaboration with Napa County Public Health have established this guidance to help inform and protect our frontline workforce. Please understand that the COVID-19 response is rapidly evolving and guidance changes frequently. Napa County EMS recommends that all providers continue to reference CDC guidance and recommendation on PPE and response for the most up to date information.



As of March 24, 2020, Napa County EMS is asking partners to follow the below guidance for Certification/Accreditation, Dispatch, Treatment, Response/Patient Contact, PPE, and Exposure/Return to Work.

CERTIFICATION/ACCREDITATION: The EMS Authority has indicated it will provide authorization for Local EMS Agencies to extend the expiration dates of EMT certificates. When the state provides that guidance Napa County EMS will implement any allowable extension process identified by EMSA for EMTs certified through our agency.

Napa County EMS intends to extend expiration dates of Paramedics for accreditations expiring during the COVID-19 Response. We will provide a temporary extension of ACLS, BLS CPR, PALS, and ITLS/PHTLS certifications for 60 days after their expiration. On a temporary basis, paramedics applying for initial accreditation will be allowed to enter the workforce without completing Base Hospital and Dispatch Visits.

DISPATCH: Napa Central Dispatch and the St. Helena ECC are using the emerging infectious disease screening (EIDS) tool. Dispatchers have been screening 9-1-1 calls for suspect cases and flag the incident to ensure responders have advanced notification to take universal precautions before coming into contact with a possible PUI. However, due to the travel specifications necessary for its full effectiveness, it is important to use caution whenever contacting patients activating the 9-1-1 system. Dispatch systems are updating protocols to implement and enhanced COVID-19 specific screening tool over the coming days. Once the tool is operational, it will be implemented for additional enhancements to our screening process.

In addition to our screening tools for emergency medical dispatch, we are flagging the premise history for all isolation orders issued by our Local Health Officer.

TREATMENT: Napa County EMS is directing medical responders to reserve the use of intubation CPAP, and nebulized treatments for high acuity patients only.

- **Intubation:** The use of supraglottic airway insertion or BLS airway management over endotracheal intubation is encouraged whenever possible. The use of supraglottic airways over intubation will help limit exposure.
- **CPAP:** Napa County EMS recommends reserving CPAP for patients only in extremis. If CPAP is needed, transport providers shall contact the receiving facility upon arrival. Receiving facilities will evaluate the patient in the ambulance bay to determine if discontinuing CPAP is appropriate during patient transfer.
- **Nebulized Treatments:** Napa County EMS recommends reserving nebulized treatments for patients only in extremis. If a nebulized treatment is needed, transport providers shall contact the receiving facility upon arrival. If a nebulizer treatment is initiated, discontinue the therapy prior to entering emergency departments.

RESPONSE/PATIENT CONTACT: Napa County EMS is monitoring CDC guidance for EMS response. We are currently, recommending that providers take measures to reduce potential exposure for EMS responders and preserve PPE as much as possible. We are recommending that when appropriate and when a patient is able to self-extricate from their home, response agencies should begin patient assessment while maintaining a six foot distance. This allows responders a safe distancing and eliminates the full PPE requirement. A single individual from response agencies, if deemed appropriate, can don full PPE. We also recommends that if a patient is unable to self-extricate, only one responder should enter to assess the patient. Agencies are not to delay emergent patient care or modify necessary emergent interventions.

We are asking all agencies to seriously consider the opportunity to practice social distancing when possible to protect frontline medical personnel and preserve PPE whenever reasonable and practical.

PPE: Due to a high demand of PPE during a time of significant shortages nationally, we are asking that all agencies ensure proper and appropriate usage of PPE. N95 masks reserved for invasive airway procedures and for patients highly suspicious of Influenza/COVID-19. N95 masks should be reused for entirety of a shift unless evidence of gross contamination exists.

EXPOSURE/RETURN TO WORK: Napa County EMS is following CDC recommendation and guidance for healthcare workers and return to work. If a responder is asymptomatic they are cleared to work. If a responder develops symptoms consistent of COVID-19, responders shall follow internal protocol for reporting and self-monitoring/quarantine. Responders should seek medical evaluation by a physician to determine if COVID-19 testing is appropriate. Continue to use CDC recommended strategies for identifying individuals who may return to work:

Use one of the below strategies to determine when HCP may return to work in healthcare settings:

1. Test-based strategy. Exclude from work until
 - Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e. g. , cough, shortness of breath); and
 - Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).
2. Non-test-based strategy. Exclude from work until:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If healthcare providers were never tested for COVID-19 but have an alternate diagnosis e.g., tested positive for influenza, criteria for return to work should be based on that diagnosis.

The current COVID-19 response in Napa County is a rapidly evolving situation, EMS response shall continue to be patient centric. We anticipate that EMS will eventually respond to a potential COVID-19 case and want to reinforce that all agencies ensure proper PPE donning and appropriate PPE usage of their staff. We continue to work closely Public Health partners and monitor CDPH and CDC guidance to ensure proper information is available for our EMS First Responders.

For questions about isolation and quarantine orders, please refer to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/pdfs/legal-authorities-isolation-quarantine.pdf>

RESPONDERS EXPOSED TO A PATIENT WITH SYMPTOMS CONSISTENT WITH COVID-19:

- **Contact your supervisor who will contact the Napa County EMS Duty Officer and follow [Napa County EMS Administrative Policy #402](#) for all possible Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) patients.**
- Use decontamination procedures consistent with CDC guidance after the call is completed.

Review: [Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services \(EMS\) Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Points \(PSAPs\) for COVID-19 in the United States.](#)

For further questions, you can contact the EMS Agency or the EMS Duty Officer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO THE FIELD

These are unprecedented times; it is intense to be on the front lines during a global health crisis. Stress, fatigue, and fear of illness for yourself or family is a stark reality for healthcare workers everywhere. While EMS can sometimes feel like a thankless job, your dedication to the Napa County community is recognized and valued. Thank you for your service.

The response to COVID-19 will carry on for months to come. We are at the beginning of a marathon. Please take care of yourselves and continue looking out for each other. Up-to-date EMS guidance will be sent out regularly and we will remain responsive to any unmet needs. Please reach out with questions; we are available to you. Take care and be safe,

