



**EMERGENCY MEDICAL
SERVICES AGENCY**
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*"To advance the health of our
communities by ensuring
quality emergency and
disaster medical services."*



Health Services
<http://ems.dhs.lacounty.gov>

March 11, 2020

VIA E-MAIL

TO: See Distribution
FROM: Marianne Gausche-Hill, MD
Medical Director
SUBJECT: COVID-19 UPDATE #3

Current Status

Today the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a pandemic.

In California, as of March 10, 2020, there were 177 cases that tested positive for COVID-19. At noon, today Los Angeles County Public Health announced that there are 27 cases including 3 cases being managed by Long Beach Health and Human Services. The specifics can be found at:

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/phcommon/public/media/mediapubhpdetail.cfm?prid=2261>

This is an extremely dynamic situation so we are collaborating with public health and all our stakeholders to monitor and proactively address our policies and guidelines to ensure the health of our community and our EMS workforce.

Dispatch

Currently Dispatch is continuing to screen travel outside of the United States including those countries with the highest spread (China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea). This likely will change as cases in Europe increase and as we see community acquired cases in the United States.

Policies and Policy Waivers

The EMS Agency is actively reviewing our prehospital care policies and will update you as changes occur. We will continue to work with our EMS Provider Agencies to assess the impact COVID-19 is having on our EMS workforce and make the necessary changes to our policies to ensure continued delivery of 9-1-1 services.

How to protect yourself

When responding to any EMS call, make sure you obtain information on whether the patient has fever, cough and/or respiratory symptoms. In all these cases, regardless of travel history, don personal protective equipment (PPE) to include a N95 mask, gown, gloves and eye protection before contact with the patient. Additionally, place a surgical mask on the patient.

It is further recommended by the EMS Agency that all EMS providers responding to the scene for which nebulized treatments, CPAP, Bag-mask ventilation, or intubation is performed don PPE as outlined above.

Your department may also consider for all medical calls, as a potential best practice, to have one provider don the PPE as above and then do an initial assessment of the patient to determine the patient needs and whether PPE is indicated and then instruct the other EMS responders of the need to don PPE.

On arrival at the hospital and after the transfer of care, doff your PPE and most importantly wash your hands using soap and water. By protecting yourself on all patient contacts with fever and cough symptoms you are greatly reducing your chance of exposure.

Outside of patient encounters, you can protect yourself and your family from potential exposure by adhering to these commonsense approaches:

- Frequently washing your hands with soap and water (20 second duration)
- In your fire station, disinfecting common areas and the fire apparatus
- Maintaining social distance between other employees, especially if sleeping quarters are shared, a minimum of 6 feet separation should be between each person
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid mass gatherings
- Stay home from work if you become sick with respiratory symptoms such as fever and cough
- While polite convention is to shake hands when meeting others during this time acknowledge others without shaking hands

Additional updates will be provided when new information is available or changes are needed to the screening or care of potential COVID-19 patients.

c: Each Supervisorial District
Director, Department of Health Services
Hospital Association of Southern California

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