

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

Title: COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Response

Directive: 003

Purpose: To provide a direction regarding potential COVID-19/Respiratory Response

Commencing Date: February 28, 2020

Sunset Date: Reevaluate after one (1) year for permanent placement

To: Okaloosa County Emergency Medical Services Personnel

Authorization: Darrel Welborn, EMS Chief

Identification

Dispatch is currently prescreening callers who have flu like symptoms and respiratory illness to determine if they have traveled to an area affected by the COVID-19 virus or if they have been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is under investigation to have COVID-19.

If dispatch identifies the patient as having potential to have COVID-19, then they will advise the crew “Respiratory Precautions needed.”

If dispatch did not advise that the patient potentially have COVID-19 as described above and the crew arrives to find a patient with signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection, then the crew is to perform the initial assessment from a distance of **at least 6 feet** from the patient, if possible. The crew shall inquire from the patient or family if the patient has travelled outside of the country to an area of known COVID-19 hot spots or has been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with, or is under investigation to have, COVID-19.

Precautions and Procedures

When dealing with a potential COVID-19 patient, the crew will need to take the following precautions and perform the following procedures:

- Don appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) before making patient contact. Appropriate PPE includes:
 - Single pair of disposable patient examination gloves (should be changed if they become torn or heavily contaminated),
 - Disposable isolation gown,
 - N-95 mask,
 - Eye protection.
- Crews should close the door or window between the cab of the ambulance and the patient compartment.
- Drivers should remove and dispose of all PPE before entering the cab of the ambulance and perform proper hand hygiene¹. Once they reach the destination, they shall don the appropriate PPE again (this is to ensure the cab of the ambulance remains isolated and not contaminated). If the door or window to the patient compartment cannot be closed and the cab isolated, then the driver is to remove all PPE as described above *except the N-95 mask*.

- Family members or friends of the patient shall NOT ride in with the patient.
- Both cab and patient compartment ventilation shall be placed on non-recirculated mode. The exhaust fan in the patient compartment shall be turned on and placed on “High.”
- Crews shall give the destination facility advanced warning of the possibility of the patient having COVID-19 so they can prepare a proper room for the patient.
- After delivering the patient to the destination, the crew shall remove and discard their PPE and perform hand hygiene¹.
- After transport, it is recommended to leave the back doors of the ambulance open to allow sufficient air exchange.
- To clean and decontaminate the truck, the crew shall don a gown and gloves. Eye protection and a mask is recommended if splashes or sprays are anticipated. The crews shall use our purple top Sani-Cloths or Opticide wipes to wipe down the patient compartment, stretcher, and equipment used to treat the patient.
The AeroClave can also be used to clean and decontaminate the ambulance. It should be run per the manufacturer’s recommendations by personnel trained on operating the device.

¹Hand Hygiene includes washing hands and scrubbing for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol

Follow Up

Crews are to notify their Branch Commander if they transport a patient with possible COVID-19 infection. The Branch Commander will follow procedures in Policy 303.00 Exposure/Infection Control (if deemed necessary). The Branch Commander will notify the AOC that a possible exposure has occurred.

If a crewmember starts to develop a fever or respiratory symptoms after transporting a potential COVID-19 patient, then he/she is to self-isolate and notify the on duty Branch Commander who will notify the AOC and the Department of Health to arrange for appropriate evaluation.