Emergency medical services (EMS) and other first responders play a vital role in providing emergency medical treatment and transport for patients in serious or life-threatening conditions. However, care and transport by EMS providers present incredible challenges due to enclosed space during transport, the frequent need for rapid medical decision-making, patient interventions with limited information, and a varying range of patient acuity. Therefore, implementation of prudent infection control precautions and correctly wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) is essential to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Personal Protective Equipment Summary Guide – based on suspected level of risk and necessary precautions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMS Responder</th>
<th>Standard Precautions</th>
<th>Contact Precautions</th>
<th>Droplet Precautions</th>
<th>Airborne Precautions</th>
<th>COVID-19 Precautions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Entering scene and during transport | • Hand hygiene  
• Gowns/protective clothing  
• Masks  
• Gloves | • Hand hygiene  
• Gowns/protective clothing  
• Gloves | • Hand hygiene  
• Masks  
• Eye protection  
• Gloves | • Hand hygiene  
• Respirator*  
• Gloves | • Hand hygiene  
• Gowns/protective clothing  
• Respirator*  
• Face shield or goggles with side protectors  
• Gloves |
| Added precautions | Risk of blood and body fluid exposure:  
• Face shield  
• Gowns/protective clothing | Risk of respiratory secretion exposure:  
• Mask  
• Face shield | Risk of infectious particle exposure:  
• Mask for patient if tolerated | Risk of intubation exposure:  
• Gowns/protective clothing | Risk of COVID-19 exposure:  
• Mask for driver/pilot if in patient area |

*Respirator: N95/P2/FFP2 (depending on country guidelines)

THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF UPDATES HAS ALSO BEEN RECOMMENDED:

• Facemasks and full face shield are an acceptable alternative until the supply chain is restored. Respirators* should be prioritized for procedures that are likely to generate respiratory aerosols, which would pose the highest exposure risk to EMS providers.  

• Eye protection, gown, and gloves continue to be recommended. If there are shortages of gowns, they should be prioritized for aerosol-generating procedures, care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated, and high-contact patient care activities that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of EMS providers.

• When the supply chain is restored, there is a strong recommendation for double gloving under high risk respiratory precautions

References:

*Respirator: N95/P2/FFP2 (depending on country guidelines)


Please Note: Given the novelty of this coronavirus, recommendations from the source references are interim and advisory in nature and are based on current knowledge of the situation. Always ensure compliance with your local public health authorities regulations surrounding conservation, usage, and selection guidance of PPE to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

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