

North Yarmouth Fire Department - Standard Operating Guidelines Operations	Code: O-312
Infectious Disease COVID-19	
Developed: 03/11/2020 Authorized: <i>GAP</i>	Revised: Pages: 3

PURPOSE:

Maine EMS, in collaboration with the State EMS Medical Directors, has activated the Emerging Infectious Diseases Surveillance (EIDS) Tool for 911 call centers. Effective immediately, call takers trained in emergency medical dispatch (EMD) will begin screening callers triaged as “Sick Patients” and persons with “Breathing Problems” with the tool. This dispatcher will then communicate the result of their screening to EMS providers at the time of dispatch.

DEFINITIONS:

- **“COVID-19”** - The virus is named "SARS-CoV-2" and the disease it causes is named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19"). COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus which was first detected in December 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China and has now been detected in other countries, including the United States. The respiratory virus causes mild symptoms like the common cold or influenza (flu), for others it can cause severe pneumonia that requires medical care or hospitalization.
- **“Negative U21”** – this indicates that the individual may have symptoms of a lower respiratory infection and/or fever but NO epidemiological risk factors of travel or close contact with a COVID-19 patient
- **“Positive U21”** – this indicates that the individual may have symptoms of a lower respiratory infection and/or fever AND epidemiological risk factors of travel or close contact with a COVID-19 patient. Please utilize the below guidance for these patients as they may be considered persons under investigation (PUIs)
- **“Inconclusive U21”** – this indicates that the call taker was unable to gather accurate and/or sufficient information to make a determination.
- **“PUI”** – denotes a person under investigation as indicated by a public safety dispatch center using Emergency Medical Dispatching.
- **“PPE”** – For this document and procedure, personal protective equipment will include all universal precautions including a N95 face mask, gown, gloves and safety glasses.

North Yarmouth Fire Department - Standard Operating Guidelines Operations	Code: O-312
Infectious Disease COVID-19	
Developed: 03/11/2020 Authorized: <i>GAP</i>	Revised: Pages: 3

PROCEDURE:

In order to effectively convey the information to EMS providers, dispatch centers have been instructed to provide the designation of “Positive U21”, “Negative U21” or “Inconclusive U21”.

Based on recommendations from the U.S. CDC and the Maine CDC as well as information provided by EMD dispatching, the following is recommended by Maine EMS:

1. Ask all patients about recent travel, particularly those with fever and respiratory illness.
2. Identify person under investigation (PUIs) using ONE (1) the following criteria:
 - a. Fever OR signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) and having close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset, including health care workers; OR
 - b. Fever AND signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath and a history of travel from an affected geographical area (China, Iran, Italy, Japan, and South Korea) within 14 days of symptom onset.

If you identify a PUI or potential PUI, please take the following steps:

1. EMS clinicians **WILL** use appropriate PPE including gown, gloves, eye protection, and airborne respiratory protection (fit-tested N-95 level or SCBA);
2. Place a surgical (simple) mask on the patient if not already in place;
3. Close the cab separation door to isolate the cab from the patient compartment. The driver should continue to wear respiratory protection throughout the transport (N95);
4. Contact the receiving hospital prior to initiating the transport and utilize the term, **“PUI for coronavirus”** during the report to hospital staff.
5. **Call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821;** and
6. Decontaminate the ambulance

The exhaust fan within the patient compartment should be turned on to draw air out of the vehicle. After transporting the patient, leave the rear doors of the transport vehicle open to allow for sufficient air exchange to remove potentially infectious particles for at least 30 minutes. To decontaminate the ambulance, any visibly surface must first be cleaned using an EPA- registered hospital disinfectant according to directions on the label. Disinfect all potentially contaminated surfaces (e.g., stretcher, rails, control panels, floors, walls, and work surfaces) with an EPA-registered hospital disinfectant according to directions on the label. Medical equipment (stethoscope, BP cuff, etc.) making patient contact should be thrown out if disposable or cleaned and disinfected using appropriate disinfectants before use on another patient.

All providers should use quality hand-washing techniques to help protect themselves and their patients. Maine EMS continues to emphasize the importance of EMS providers obtaining influenza (flu) vaccinations. Individuals who are unable to receive a vaccination or refuse for any reason should be using appropriate personal protective equipment, such as using a simple mask at all times while entering healthcare facilities and/or interacting with patients. Clinically permitting, all patients who are suspected of having the flu or flu-like illness should wear a surgical face mask at all times (e.g. transfer to the ambulance, during transport, and entering the healthcare facility).

North Yarmouth Fire Rescue - Standard Operating Guidelines Administration	O-312
Infectious Disease COVID-19	
Developed: 03/12/2020 Authorized: GAP	Revised: Pages: 3

Additionally, Maine EMS has added the following questions to MEFIRS for all 911 patient encounters. Please answer all the supplemental COVID-19 questions to the best of your ability.

- Has the patient traveled outside the United States in the past 30 days?
- If yes, please provide the travel begin date, end date, and countries visited (appearing as three separate questions in MEFIRS).
- Does this patient meet the criteria of a person under investigation (PUI) based on the most recent Maine EMS Clinical Bulletin for COVID-19?

Regardless of your treatment, these identifying factors should be communicated to the receiving healthcare facility.

If EMS providers fail to don protective PPE that is recommended by the CDC for a patient suspected of carrying the SARS-COV-2 virus, they will not be permitted to return to the fire station and will be recommended to be quarantined for up to 2 weeks or until they test negative as a carrier.

Recommendations for spread prevention:

- Stay home if you have a fever until you are at least 24 hours fever-free.
- WASH YOUR HANDS!
- Don't touch your face.
- Masks should be worn in emergency setting only. Persistent use of masks promotes increased exposure by constantly touching the face.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick.
- Wash all regularly touched surfaces frequently including handles, doorknobs/edges, light switches, railings, etc.