



# County of San Diego

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**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY**  
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**NICK YPHANTIDES, M.D., M.P.H.**  
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March 12, 2020

## **EMS NON-PATIENT PASSENGER CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Best practices for management of the COVID-19 outbreak are dynamic due to the rapidly evolving situation and changing scientific knowledge. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for [EMS providers](#) and [healthcare personnel](#) are continuously updated. All healthcare personnel should review these recommendations regularly.

EMS providers may **encounter a known or suspected symptomatic COVID-19 patient**. If prehospital providers have contact with a symptomatic patient meeting the current CDC criteria, they shall follow the County of San Diego EMS Medical Director's PPE and exposure reporting directions dated February 25, 2020.

[CDC has recommended EMS providers limit non-patient passenger riders](#) for ALL ambulance patients whenever possible. To protect the public health and EMS provider safety, non-patient passengers may not be transported in San Diego County ambulances except under the following specific situations:

- Pediatric-patient parent or guardian (limited to one adult/caregiver)
- Most appropriate adult available (i.e., caregiver, family member, historian who knows patient well) for an obtunded, confused, or non-verbal patient
- Law enforcement or other public safety personnel, as required to maintain patient/provider safety

Any passenger riders, most importantly those accompanying patients with respiratory complaints or fevers, should wear a surgical facemask as soon as practical. Non-patient passengers should be properly restrained in the patient care compartment, with EMS provider safety taken into consideration. Decontamination procedures should include spaces contacted by all passengers, as appropriate.

Thank you for your continued support and attention to managing this unprecedented event.

Respectfully,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director  
Emergency Medical Services  
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

cc: Nick Yphantides, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer  
Andrew Parr, EMS Administrator



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**NICK YPHANTIDES, M.D., M.P.H.**  
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

March 11, 2020

## **EMS TREATMENT CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Best practices for management of the COVID-19 outbreak are dynamic due to the rapidly evolving situation and changing scientific knowledge. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for [EMS providers](#) and [healthcare personnel](#) are continuously updated. All healthcare personnel should review these recommendations regularly.

EMS providers may **encounter a known or suspected symptomatic COVID-19 patient**. If prehospital providers have contact with a symptomatic patient meeting the current CDC criteria, they shall follow the [County of San Diego EMS Medical Director's PPE and exposure reporting directions](#) dated February 25, 2020.

[CDC has recommended EMS providers limit aerosol-generating treatments](#) whenever possible. Exercise caution during procedures that may be aerosol-generating including:

- Endotracheal intubation
  - Perilaryngeal/King airway preferred
- Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP)
- Nebulized medications
- Suctioning, and
- Bag valve mask (BVM) ventilation.
  - BVM ventilation should be equipped with a HEPA filter, if used.

Base hospital consultation is recommended for any patients that may otherwise receive one or more of these treatments. Lower flow nasal cannula oxygen (2-4 liters/per minute) is considered safe at this time for use if pulse oximetry <92%.

Thank you for your continued support and attention to managing this unprecedented event.

Respectfully,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director  
Emergency Medical Services  
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

cc: Nick Yphantides, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer  
Andrew Parr, EMS Administrator