

COVID-19 Guidance Resources for Law Enforcement Personnel:

Executive Summary:

There is a lot of available information for Health Care Workers and EMS, but not very much for Law Enforcement who have several roles as part of their work that puts them at increased risk for being infected by COVID-19. This document raises the awareness of that risk and offers a clearinghouse of resources specifically for Law Enforcement, First Responders/Public Safety.

There is a lot of emphasis on info & guidance on COVID-19 for health care workers and EMS but very little specifically for law enforcement. Many law enforcement personnel carry an additional role as a medical first responder, but may have not had any/much initial or ongoing training to respond to a novel disease like COVID-19.

Then, there is their main role of keeping people safe and rounding up the suspects. PPE becomes much more difficult. Running after someone or making yourself heard as you enter a house with a mask? Handling some of your equipment with gloves? Wearing a gown could be life threatening for you or someone else because you couldn't get to your belt?

Your work typically involves seeing many people on a daily basis, some of them just need help of one type of another, others may be trying to avoid you. During this pandemic, all of them are a risk because they may have COVID-19, so you need to protect to the best of your ability.

About 25% of people that have COVID don't have symptoms, others may have only mild symptoms they barely notice or figure is just a cold, so you have to treat everyone like they have it. And, even the ones that are going to develop symptoms, are infectious (able to pass the virus to you or someone else) for 1-3 days BEFORE they have the first symptom. And, it's easier to pass along than they thought. It can be spread not only through coughing and sneezing, but also through singing, talking, or just breathing. It hangs in the air. The virus can also stay alive from hours to days, depending on the material, on surfaces and objects. How does it get there? Someone coughs, sneezes or any of the others mentioned above, and the droplets land directly on the surfaces or objects. Or, an infected person can have virus on their hands from covering a cough or sneeze, or just by rubbing their nose or mouth, and then touches a table, desk, doorknob, light switch, phone dish, keyboard (well, it's a long list), you touch the item and touch your eyes, nose or mouth, and have now been exposed. If either of you had washed your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, used disinfectant wipes, or even hand sanitizer, it wouldn't be a risk for infection from COVID-19 or other diseases spread the same way. If this sounds scary, it's meant to be. We are all in this together and need to be careful for ourselves and others. It can be more

difficult for law enforcement because some of the people you come in contact with don't want to protect you.

If you aren't already aware of changes in dispatch or operations, check with your supervisors. Some agencies have modified their dispatches and SOPs to decrease the risk and are substituting using a phone for in-person contact. This can handle quite a bit of the work but, just like other First Responders, sometimes in-person contact is the only way. Check your SOPs for changes on this topic too. If no changes have been made in your agency, then ask via a union or supervisor, if other agencies' guidelines for COVID-19 can be evaluated for adoption.

Lastly, some risk reduction suggestions that may help:

1. If you are transporting a person in the backseat of your work vehicle and there is not already a plexiglass barrier between the front and back, seek permission to attach clear plastic sheeting to the cage as a droplet barrier.
2. Regularly clean and disinfect, with an approved cleaner, your workspace(s) and your vehicle (seats, steering wheel, gear knob, handles, radio, computer, etc.)
3. If possible, while still at work, remove your clothes & place them in a disposable or washable bag and shower before going home. If it's not possible to do that at work, then plan ahead and remove your clothes at the door or in the laundry room, and then shower. Dirty work clothes should be stored separated from other dirty laundry and washed separately. It is not required, but using an additive such as Lysol Laundry Sanitizer, Biz, or and Oxi-Clean product may be used. Wash your hands often and wipe off the inside of the washing machine that doesn't come into contact with the soap and water during the wash cycle.
4. If there is someone at home who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 infection if they were to get it, consider whether you should be isolating yourself within the home or if the person would be safer staying with other family or a friend until the threat of infection is gone. Some of those at high risk would be someone with cancer, other immunocompromise such as high dose or long-term corticosteroid use, taking biologicals, post-transplant including STEM cell & CAR-T cell, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung disease, and kidney disease. This can also be discussed with their physician(s) for recommendations.
5. If your Agency does not already have an infection control or occupational health program, someone from your Agency may want to contact the Fire and/or EMS Agency in your area for access to their Designated Infection Control Officer or Occupational Health Program Manager for assistance with your program. Another contact to be made, if not already done, would be your local Public Health Office. They can help with local data as well as exposure follow up and contact tracing.

Included here are links to resources, some specifically for Law Enforcement, others for Public Safety in general as well as general CDC COVID-19 information:

Guidance for Public Safety Personnel

New Training Offered by NIH on COVID-19 for Workers:

<https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/covid-19-workers-get-training-protect-their-own-health>

CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Law Enforcement Personnel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/guidance-law-enforcement.pdf>

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1646/MR1646.ch5.pdf

CDC COVID-19 Guidance for Correctional & Detention Facilities:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/correction-detention/faq.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/correction-detention/guidance-correctional-detention.html>

CDC COVID-19 Guidance for PSAPs (911 Centers) and EMS Systems:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>

CDC Home Page for COVID-19 and First Responders with Specific Links for Info:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/first-responders.html>

New NIOSH COVID-19 Website:

https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/emres/2019_ncov.html?deliveryName=USCDC_308-DM26149

Public Safety/First Responder Health and Safety Resources:

ASPR/Tracie Resources for Responder Health & Safety:

<https://asprtracie.hhs.gov/technical-resources/72/responder-safety-and-health>

State of Minnesota Page for Stress & Psychological Support Resources for First Responders:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/behavioral/index.html#responder>

State of Minnesota Page for Stress & Psychological Support Resources (includes many different groups like emergency responders and children):

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ep/behavioral/index.html>

US Health & Human Services Resources for Emergency Response & Public Safety Workers:

<https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma11-disaster-18.pdf>

CDC Guidance for COVID-19-Related Stress & Anxiety Including Links for First Responders:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html

State of Washington: Staying Healthy at Home Forum:

<https://medium.com/wadepthealth/healthy-homes-18e6c9d7cd1d>

COVID-19 Guidance for PPE & Infection Control Practices

CDC Guidance on Hand Hygiene:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/hcp-hand-sanitizer.html>

Frequently Asked Questions about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html>

Donning and Doffing of PPE:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/PPE-Sequence-508.pdf>

Donning and Doffing a Disposable Respirator (N95 Facemask):

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-131/pdfs/2010-131.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH PUB2010131>

CDC Infographic on How to Check an N95 for a Face Seal:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2018-130/pdfs/2018-130.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH PUB2018130>

3 Factors Required for a Respirator to be Effective:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/KeyFactorsRequiredResp01042018-508.pdf>

Video on N95 Respiratory Donning & Doffing and Every Use Seal Check:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tzpz5fko-fg>

Understanding the Difference between Surgical Masks and N95 Respirators:

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/UnderstandDifferenceInfographic-508.pdf>



Helping the Helpers

CDC Cleaning & Disinfecting Your Facility:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

CDC Community (Non-Health Care Facilities) Cleaning & Disinfection:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

EPA Approved Disinfectants for COVID-19:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

CDC General Information Resources:

CDC About COVID-19 with Different Sections:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/>

CDC COVID-19 Home Page

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

CDC COVID-19 Situation Summary (Daily M-F) with Many Links to Important Info:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>