



County of San Diego

NICK MACCHIONE, FACHE
AGENCY DIRECTOR

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
6255 MISSION GORGE ROAD, MAIL STOP S-555
SAN DIEGO, CA 92120-3599
(619) 285-6429 • FAX (619) 285-6531

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

April 3, 2020

EMS PERSONNEL MASKING RECOMMENDATIONS 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.

On April 1st, the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) recommended the general public wear face coverings](#). On April 3, CDC [recommended cloth face coverings in public settings](#). EMS personnel should take the following precautions:

- Continue to wear N95 respirators (or equivalent) when likely to engage in aerosol-generating procedures **OR while encountering patients with severe aerosol-generating symptoms** (e.g., coughing, sneezing);
- **Place a mask on all EMS patients** at initial encounter, as tolerated;
- **Wear respiratory protection for every EMS response** (facemask or higher level protection as indicated);
- Institute a 1-crew member “scout” procedure to determine the nature of the EMS contact and the appropriate level of crew PPE;
- Follow CDPH and [County Public Health](#) recommendations when on- and off-duty, including maintaining social distancing, frequent hand washing, and face coverings when leaving your home.

These interventions will help protect you as you protect our community – including from asymptomatic transmission of the novel coronavirus. 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



Date: April 7, 2020
To: All City Medics and Bridged EMT's
From: Brandon Greene, City Operations Manager
Subject: Face Coverings While on Duty

SDFD Chief Stowell issued an Office of The Chief memo yesterday after our daily update email went out. You can find that memo attached to the same email as this memo. The Chief says it well, so our intent in the City is to follow SDFD's lead.

In short, all AMR Paramedics and Bridge EMTs are expected to wear a face covering at all times while on-duty. We have ordered the same cloth face coverings as SDFD, but they will not be ready for pickup until later this week. Until they arrive, AMR City Operations personnel should utilize a surgical mask when not on a response. Face coverings should not be altered or decorated in any way, with the exception of writing your name in a discrete location to help identify the mask as yours. To conserve masks, please keep the same surgical mask for non-response use throughout your shift.

Remember, face coverings worn when not on a response are intended for the protection of others from you. Please do your part to be an example to the public and help to "Flatten the Curve."



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF

NO: 20-015
DATE: April 6, 2020
TO: All Personnel
FROM: Colin Stowell, Fire Chief
SUBJECT: Facial Coverings for On-Duty Employees

Recent updates to county, state, and national guidance on using face coverings necessitates a change for San Diego Fire-Rescue Department personnel. The Center for Disease Control (CDC), California Department of Public Health (CDPH), County of San Diego Health and Human Services and the International Association of Fire Fighters recommend using a face covering at all times as noted in the attached supporting documents.

Accordingly, and in coordination with our Medical Director, I am requiring that all Fire-Rescue Department personnel; firefighters, lifeguards, dispatchers and civilian staff, wear a department issued face covering while on-duty. This includes routine activities such as dispatching, administrative duties, station and apparatus maintenance, equipment inspections, cooking and training in which interfacing with the public or other personnel is possible. Face coverings do not need to be worn while in a closed room without other persons present, such as while bathing or sleeping. Coverings to be worn for non-emergency response activities will be of a department issued cloth type, surgical or non-medical grade masks.

The Department has secured an initial order of cloth masks that are being distributed beginning Monday, April 6, 2020. Additional cloth masks are on order. Until such time as the Department can provide a cloth mask to all members, surgical masks and/or non-medical grade masks such as the ones acquired through Home Depot will be distributed to all personnel for use in accordance with this directive. The expectation is that the cloth mask be the primary face covering used for all activities that do not involve patient care. The surgical or non-medical mask may also be used while the department issued cloth mask is being laundered. If you have not been issued a surgical or non-medical mask yet and you need one to accomplish laundering, work through your chain of command.

If the surgical or non-medical mask must be used, it is the expectation that these masks will last each employee for the duration of their assigned work shift barring any extenuating circumstances. Personal protection equipment, including all mask types, are at critically short supply. N95/100s or higher-level respirator should not be worn for routine activities. The COVID-19 Incident Management Team Logistics Section will be providing further details on cloth face covering as well as surgical and non-medical mask use and distribution.

The wearing of face coverings while on-duty not only protects our employees by minimizing risks, but it also sets an example for the public who should be wearing face coverings for their own safety and ours. In addition to this on-duty requirement, I strongly encourage personnel to wear face covering masks during days off while in contact with family or the public in order to limit exposure or possible community based spread of the Coronavirus. This covering is of your choosing, but should conform to recommendations made by recognized health organizations.

It is important to practice strict hand washing before and after touching and adjusting face coverings and masks. Face covering and masks are not a replacement for other evidence-based preventive measures such as physical distancing, frequent hand washing practices, and remaining at home when sick or not performing essential activities.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our community and each other.