

SCOPE:

Applies to all Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Personnel

PURPOSE:

The objective of this policy is to provide Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department personnel with a comprehensive infection control system that maximizes protection against communicable diseases for all personnel and for the public that they serve.

Responsibility:

The Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant Chiefs, Battalion Chiefs and Captains are responsible for the enforcement of this policy. Each Captain/Company Officer is responsible for implementing and training Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department personnel in the application of this policy. It is the responsibility of all Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department personnel to know, understand and use this policy according to the guidelines.

POLICY:

1.1 Policy Overview

1. This policy applies to all personnel providing fire, rescue and emergency medical services. Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department (MFRD) recognizes that communicable disease exposure is an occupational health hazard. Communicable disease transmission is possible during any aspect of emergency response, including in-station operations. The health and welfare of each member is a shared concern of the member, the chain of command, and this department. Although each member is ultimately responsible for his or her own health, MFRD recognizes a responsibility to provide as safe a workplace as possible. The goal of the program is to provide all members with the best available protection from an occupationally acquired communicable disease.
2. It is Murfreesboro Fire Rescue Department's policy to provide the following:
 - a. Provide fire, rescue and emergency medical services to the public without regard to known or suspected diagnosis of communicable diseases. Regard all patient contact as potentially infectious.
 - b. Universal precautions will be observed at all times and will be expanded to include all body fluids and other potentially infectious material (body substance isolation).
 - c. Provide all members with the training, immunizations and personal protective equipment (PPE) needed for protection from communicable diseases.
 - d. Recognize the need for work restrictions based on infection control concerns.

- e. Regard all medical information as strictly confidential. No member's health information will be released without signed consent of the employee.
3. This document provides model policies and procedures necessary to help MFRD personnel respond to calls that involve, or is suspected to involve the Coronavirus. Included are steps for:
- a. Background of COVID-19
 - b. PPE and personal protection
 - c. Patient assessment
 - d. Decontamination procedures (equipment & personnel)
 - e. Documentation
 - f. Station cleaning

1.2 Background

The CDC is responding to an outbreak of a respiratory disease caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and has now been detected in more than one hundred (100) locations internationally, including the United States. The virus has been named "SARS-CoV-2" and the diseases it causes has been named "coronavirus disease 2019" (abbreviated "COVID-19").

Coronavirus are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus named SARS-CoV-2.

Published and early reports suggest spread from person-to-person most frequently happens during close exposure to a person infected with COVID-19. Person-to-person appears to occur similar to other respiratory viruses, mainly via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouth, nose or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Although not likely to be the predominant mode of transmission, it is not clear the extent to which touching a surface contaminated with the virus and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes contributes to transmission.

1.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

1. Recommended PPE for "flu like symptoms" responses:
 - a. Single pair of disposable patient examination gloves. Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated.
 - b. Disposable isolation gown
 - c. Respiratory protection (N95)

- d. Eye protection (goggles or safety glasses that provide protection from the front and side)

1.4 Ways to Limit Your Risk of COVID-19 (Home & Work)

1. Avoid close contact with people who are or may be sick.
2. Do not touch your face (eyes, nose, and mouth) with unwashed hands.
3. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
4. Wash your hands often and thoroughly. It's the foundation of infection control.
5. Clean "high touch" surfaces several times daily. Those surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, toilets, phones, keyboards, nightstands and tables with the appropriate spray or wipes.
6. Limit non-essential travel.

1.5 On Calls

1. When responding for a patient with "flu like symptoms", exercise caution.
 - a. If dispatch advises that the patient has "flu like symptoms", EMS clinicians should put on appropriate PPE before entering the scene.
 - b. We should limit the number of responders to one (1) that enters to do the initial assessment of the patient. Other responder will then be utilized if the patient's condition warrants and/or the patient does not meet the COVID-19 case criteria.
 - c. Begin patient assessment from a distance of at least six (6) feet. Question the patient with the appropriate questions about their current medical condition (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, flu-like symptoms).
 - d. A patient temperature should be taken at that point. A temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be considered elevated.
 - e. Minimize contact until a facemask can be placed on the patient for source control.
 - f. If a nasal cannula is in place, a facemask should be worn over the nasal cannula. Alternatively, an oxygen mask can be used if clinically indicated.
 - g. If COVID-19 is not suspected, EMS clinicians should follow standard procedures and use appropriate PPE for evaluating a patient with a potential respiratory infection.
 - h. Properly doff your PPE and dispose of it in a red biohazard bag. Clean hands with a germicidal agent until proper handwashing is possible. Dispose of the bagged PPE at the station once you return. Be sure the bag is sealed. Contact the Medical Training Coordinator/Exposure Control Officer to have the bag picked up for disposal.

- i. Clean your apparatus (cab/compartment) and medical equipment after each use for a patient with “flu like symptoms”. EMS gloves and eye protection should be used while cleaning. Wash hands thoroughly afterward.
- j. Take a shower and change to a clean uniform. The duty uniform should be washed.
- k. When filling out the run report, document who entered the scene, PPE used, and other people (family, friends, etc.) that were there.
- l. If the patient is confirmed to have the COVID-19, documentation as an exposure should be completed for everyone that was on the response.

1.6 Actions Taken by MFRD in Response to COVID-19

- 1. Self-monitoring will be done three (3) times daily at the stations (7a, 7p, 7a), starting with the beginning of the shift, mid-point and end of shift. These results should be recorded in the COVID – 19 Daily Assessment in Target Solutions.
- 2. Dispatch is now asking the caller about the patient having “flu like symptoms,” and we are only responding to these incidents at the request of RCEMS.
- 3. Prolonged patient contact is defined as greater than 3-5 minute exposure with a patient that has a positive test result for COVID – 19 and will be classified as a high risk exposure. Quarantine procedure will be established at that point as needed.
- 4. All apparatus are carrying germicidal gel, hand wash, eye protection, isolation kits, medical gloves and biohazard bags.
- 5. Showers and washers are at every station.
- 6. As this situation is evolving, virus information has and will continue to be pushed out to all personnel via email and in-person training if needed. The goal is to keep everyone updated with the latest information and guidance on COVID-19.

1.7 Important Things to Remember

- 1. If you are sick, STAY HOME.
- 2. If you come to work sick, your Captain will send you back home immediately.
- 3. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus.
- 4. Practice good hand hygiene.
- 5. Always have extra uniforms ready while on duty.