

## Vermont EMS Information Memorandum

**TO:** Vermont Emergency Providers, Service Leaders, District Medical Advisors  
**CC:** Daniel Wolfson, MD - State EMS Medical Director  
**FROM:** Dan Batsie, Chief of EMS, Vermont Department of Health  
**DATE:** March 19, 2020  
**Subject: Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Personal Protective Equipment Update**

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**SUMMARY** – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently updated their Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Systems. Included in this update were recommendations on personal protective equipment (PPE) in situations of supply chain interruption. Given that most Vermont emergency response agencies are facing similar challenges associated with PPE, it is now reasonable for responders to adopt the following personal protection standards.

### PROCEDURE:

- **Responders who will be in direct contact with a patient with possible COVID-19 infection or who will be in the compartment with the patient should follow Standard, Precautions and use the following PPE:**
  - **Facemask**
    - **N95 respirators or respirators that offer a higher level of protection should be used instead of a facemask when in the presence of a confirmed COVID-19 case or when performing or present for an aerosol-generating procedure.**
  - **Eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face). Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are NOT considered adequate eye protection.**
  - **A single pair of disposable patient examination gloves. Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated.**
  - **Isolation gown.**
    - **If there are shortages of gowns, they should be prioritized for aerosol-generating procedures, care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated, and high-contact patient care activities that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of EMS clinicians (e.g., moving patient onto a stretcher).**

*Please note that CDC guidelines consider a facemask equivalent to an N-95 mask when assigning risk to a potential COVID-19 contact. Using a mask instead of an N-95 mask would not change isolation recommendations.*

For more specific information regarding EMS interaction with COVID-19 please see the attached Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Interim Guidance or visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>.

If there are any questions with regard to this guidance, please feel free to contact the Vermont EMS office.

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