COVID-19 guidance for EMS and FIRST RESPONDERS when caring for suspected or confirmed patients

Purpose
This information is intended to help healthcare providers reduce the risk for SARS-CoV-2 transmission, especially with regards to resuscitation care. Please note that guidance may vary based on location.

EMS Dispatchers
EMS Dispatch should question callers about potential COVID-19 signs, symptoms, and risk factors
However, this should not supersedes providing pre-arrival instructions to callers when lifesaving interventions are required

When potential COVID-19 infection is suspected in a patient needed emergency transport:
EMS Dispatch should notify prehospital care providers and healthcare facilities in advance that the patient may have COVID-19

PPE & Exposure Reduction
If dispatchers advise that a patient is suspected of having a COVID-19 infection, protect with:

- A single pair of disposable gloves
- Facemask, or higher-level respirator (eg, N95) if available
  - N95 respirators should be prioritized instead of a facemask for aerosol-generating procedures
  - Care activities where splash/spray is anticipated
  - High contact patient care activities

- Eye protection
- Goggles
- Disposible face shield that fully covers the front and side of the face
- Gowns
  - In the event of a gown shortage, they should be prioritized for:
    - Aerosol-generating procedures
    - Care activities where splash/spray is anticipated
    - High contact patient care activities

Aerosol Generating Procedures
If away from pedestrians:
- Use N95 mask and open rear doors during aerosol generating procedures
- Equipped BOPPs and other ventilatory equipment with a HEPA filter for expired air

Non aerosol-generating procedures
- Intravenous injections
- Nasopharyngeal swabs
- Drawing bloodwork
- Endotracheal Intubation
- Non-invasive ventilation
- CPR

Special Considerations for Transport
1. Notify the receiving facility prior to arrival if the patient has signs, symptoms, or risk factors for COVID-19
2. Keep the patient separated from other people as much as possible:
   - Isolate ambulance driver from patient area by keeping windows closed
   - Family should not ride in transport vehicle, if possible. Provide face masks if riding in transport vehicle
3. If ventilating in a vehicle without an isolated driver compartment, create a negative pressure gradient by:
   - Open outside air vents in the driven area
   - Turn on rear exhaust ventilation fans to the highest setting

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