

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. Alternatives in the protocol considerations for MDIs (if available) over aerosolized medications and all high risk procedures should be looked at and guidance given for compromised/alternative treatments.**

Guidelines were posted on the WV Office of Emergency Medical Services' (OEMS) website on Feb. 13, 2020 and were sent out in Continuum. WVOEMS has considered MDI inhaler. Emergency Protocol E-101 released April 1, 2020 will address the use of the OPTIONAL drug and procedure.

Below is the guideline posted on the 13th of February and can be found at <https://www.wvoems.org/files/medical-direction/2019-coronavirus-information>.

- 2. There needs to be guidance from OEMS on reuse PPE, such as N95 Masks.**

EMS agencies should be following the CDC guidelines. The link to this information can be found at

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/hcwcontrols/recommendedguidanceextuse.html>

- Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures.
- Discard N95 respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients.
- Discard N95 respirators following close contact with, or exit from, the care area of any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.
- Consider use of a cleanable face shield (preferred³) over an N95 respirator and/or other steps (e.g., masking patients, use of engineering controls) to reduce surface contamination.
- Perform hand hygiene with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary, for comfort or to maintain fit).

- 3. High Risk ETI/Suctioning protocol**

This can be found both **on the CDC Website** at <https://www.cdc.gov/> and **WVOEMS website** at <https://www.wvoems.org/medical-direction/novel-coronavirus-information>; in addition to the PPE described above, EMS clinicians should exercise caution if an aerosol-generating procedure (e.g., bag valve mask (BVM) ventilation, oropharyngeal suctioning, endotracheal intubation, nebulizer treatment, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP), bi-phasic positive airway pressure (biPAP), or resuscitation involving emergency intubation or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is necessary.

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4. How should an EMS agency handle issues regarding the procurement of Oxygen, IV supplies, and medications when those become unavailable through standard suppliers?

EMS agencies should report issues regarding medical supplies to Dr. Mills, WV State OEMS Medical Director, at Michael.R.Mills@wv.gov. Please include Request for Medical Supplies in the subject line.

5. How should an EMS agency handle issues with PPE shortages?

EMS agencies should contact their local health departments.

6. Has Electronic Patient Care Record (ePCR) documentation changed during the COVID-19 Pandemic?

Documentation has not and will not change. It is a critical and required component of every patient care record. As a reminder, it is also very important to document PPE usage on your ePCR. This data is utilized to ensure provider safety precautions are being adhered to and a mechanism to track PPE agency needs.

7. Will agencies be granted an extension if their licenses are due to expire soon?

There is a formal process being followed to request an extension. The legislative rule must be temporarily suspended by the Governor. You should contact the WVOEMS Licensing Unit for updates. An announcement through continuum will be sent to all agencies once the approval has been granted.

8. Could WVOEMS conduct a weekly conference call or Blackboard meeting weekly for all agency officials to address concerns?

A form has been developed for EMS agencies to submit by 9:00 a.m. each Monday. Responses will be prepared and e-mailed out to agencies in Continuum.

9. EMS Prehospital Providers are frightened. What advice can you give to provide them reassurance?

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Please encourage all prehospital hospital providers to follow the CDC guidelines to ensure their safety.

10. Relief of personnel: we would like to see a process to recertify cards of those who have expired – provisionally, until the disaster has ended.

A 90-day extension was granted by WVOEMS that extends certification and recertification requirements for those expiring March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020. WVOEMS will continue to monitor the situation. The notification of this event was released through Continuum on March 13, 2020.

11. Will a further extension be granted to Education and Recertification requirements for people that are expiring next year to allow additional time for Educational Institutes to provide training to prehospital providers?

A 90-day extension was granted by WVOEMS that extends certification requirements. WVOEMS will continue to monitor the situation.

12. Is there a Shared Drive for WV EMS agencies to access information, forms, procedures, etc. and to submit and share ideas with WVOEMS?

Pertinent WVOEMS information regarding COVID-19 will be placed on the WVOEMS website at <https://www.wvoems.org/medical-direction/novel-coronavirus-information>. If information you need is not available there or should you wish to submit or share ideas, the EMS Agency's Official Representative may e-mail the WV State OEMS Medical Director at Michael.R.Mills@wv.gov and Vicki Hildreth at Vicki.L.Hildreth@wv.gov.

13. Flexibility to change plans policies and procedures.

A brief description of a few topics that WVOEMS has addressed is as follows:

- Dissemination of an Interim Guidance for Emergency Medical Services Systems and 911 Public Safety Answering Point for 2019-nCoV Information in the United States;
- Extended recertifications expiring March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020;
- Extended education deadlines requirements for recertifications expiring March 31, 2020 to June 30, 2020;
- Released an E100 Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol to provide guidance for EMS Operations;
- HIPAA Guidance

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- Information regarding Pearson VUE Testing Centers
- COVID PPE for Advance Airway and Cardiac Arrests

WVOEMS disseminates all information through Continuum as it becomes available. For the most updated information, please ensure that CDC guidelines are followed, the WVOEMS website viewed, and WVOEMS messages are reviewed promptly.

14. Is there an OEMS Liaison to provide information and coordinate EMS response when needed?

If information is needed, the EMS Agency's Official Representative may e-mail the WV State OEMS Medical Director at Michael.R.Mills@wv.gov and Vicki Hildreth at Vicki.L.Hildreth@wv.gov.

15. Is there a Crisis Standard of Care available for EMS agencies to reference?

The Department of Health and Human Resources, Center for Threat Prep is currently in the process of finalizing a formal Crisis Standard of Care for the State of West Virginia.

16. Why am I not receiving e-mails sent through Continuum?

If you are not receiving information through Continuum, this is generally due to an outdated e-mail address in your Continuum account. Please verify that your e-mail, address, phone numbers, etc. are up-to-date.