



Advisory 20-04: COVID-19 Responder Exposure and Monitoring Update

To: All Providers

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This weekend the CDC released updated guidance for when to monitor personnel if they are exposed to a patient with COVID-19. That guidance is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html> and is applicable to all branches of public safety.

Close contact for healthcare exposures is now defined as more than brief contact when:

- a) being within approximately 6 feet, of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (such as caring for or visiting the patient; or sitting within 6 feet of the patient in a healthcare waiting area or room); or
- b) having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions of the patient (e.g., being coughed on, touching used tissues with a bare hand).

Examples of brief contact include: briefly (less than a few minutes) entering the patient's room without having direct contact with the patient or their secretions/excretions, brief conversation at a triage desk with a patient who was not wearing a facemask, etc.

In the event of Close Contact with a person with COVID-19, agencies should follow the Table included in the referenced CDC recommendations in order to determine monitoring and work restrictions.

In the event responders encounter an individual under self-quarantine but is without symptoms (eg a response for an ankle injury in an isolated individual), it is recommended that responders offer a mask to the patient, don gloves and respiratory PPE. This way based on the guidelines if the patient later tests positive the provider is not subject to work restrictions or anything more than self-monitoring.

These new recommendations reinforce that minimizing the number of responders entering the patient care space, assessing a patient more than 6 feet away, and if having symptoms such as respiratory illness or fever, to don appropriate PPE (at minimum, mask, gloves, and eye protection), dramatically reduces transmission and thus the potential for later isolation or work restriction.

All responders should continue to self-monitor, not come to work, and report to your employer if they experience fever or respiratory symptoms.

As guidance continues to change rapidly, refer to the CDC website for updates. Please do not hesitate to contact this office with questions.

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