



# HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** All Officers and Members  
**From:** Matthew White, Assistant Fire Chief *MW*  
**Through:** Justin Wells, Executive Assistant Fire Chief *JW*  
**Subject:** Hypoxic Patients with COVID-19 Infections  
**Date:** August 6, 2020

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Sylvester Turner

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**Controller,**  
Chris Brown

Given the high prevalence of COVID-19 positive patients in the City of Houston, and the corresponding increase in demand for EMS services, the following criteria have been enacted for the disposition of patients found to be hypoxic to avenues other than ALS transport. These guidelines will allow BLS transport for patients found initially to be hypoxic but who respond to oxygen, and to allow suspected COVID-19 patients with no or very mild symptoms to be referred to ETHAN for disposition. Please review the accompanying Medical Notes for further information and relay any questions through your chain of command.

### **BLS Transport of Hypoxic Patients with Presumed or Known COVID-19 Infections**

Many patients with known or suspected COVID-19 infections may present with silent hypoxia; a low oxygen saturation but otherwise well appearing. To clarify when these patients may be transported by BLS, the following guidelines shall be enacted:

For all patients presenting with a known or suspected COVID-19 infection requiring supplemental oxygen, BLS transport is appropriate if ALL of the following guidelines are met;

1. Oxygen saturation greater than 90% with supplemental oxygen
2. Normal breath sounds without wheezing, rales, or rhonchi
3. Systolic blood pressure >100 and Respiratory rate <24
4. No perceived shortness of breath by the patient
5. No history of COPD, emphysema, asthma, or congestive heart failure
6. Age less than 80 years old

Any questions regarding this memorandum will be addressed through the chain of command.

**20-209**



**Samuel Peña, Fire Chief**  
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