



# 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:** COVID-19 PPE and Patient Management Continue  
**Date:** June 18, 2020

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Sylvester Turner

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As COVID-19 continues to spread and infect more residents in HFD's response area, Houston Firefighters are encountering an increasing number of COVID-19 positive citizens who call for service. HFD Infection Control Office continues to report cases in which members incur avoidable exposures requiring them to be placed in Work Restriction / Quarantine due to non-compliance with the directives put forth in General Order #20-106 (March 26, 2020).

There are no exclusion criteria for COVID-19 and no way to 'Rule Out' or 'Screen Out' COVID-19 in the field. The following directives previously put forth in General Order #20-106 are to be followed for **ALL** patients based on the member's involvement with the patient and the treatments/therapies/actions provided. These situations should drive the member's PPE usage and **NOT the member's opinion or assessment of the patient with regards to COVID-19.**

Restated from General Order #20-106 along with further clarification:

- For all medical calls, only one (1) member (Recon) will approach the patient inside a six (6) foot perimeter to evaluate. The Recon will wear the mandatory **"PRIMARY" PPE (Protective Eyewear, N95 Mask, and Gloves).**
- All members except the Recon will remain outside a six (6) foot perimeter wearing the mandatory **"MINIMUM" PPE (Protective Eyewear and Gloves)** unless the patient's severity requires members to assist the Recon with patient care. Any assistant members inside the perimeter will wear mandatory **PRIMARY PPE (Protective Eyewear, N95 mask, and Gloves).**
- ANY patient exhibiting aerosol symptoms (cough, sneezing) or fever will have a surgical mask placed on them and ANY patient with difficulty breathing will have a Non-Rebreather (NRB) Oxygen Mask or Nasal Canula (NC) placed. A surgical mask will be placed over the NRB or NC.
- **"Maximum PPE" (Protective Eyewear, N95 mask, Gloves and Protective Gown)** will be worn for any patient that requires aerosolized treatments (nebulizer, CPAP, intubation) or CPR for members inside a six (6) foot perimeter.

20-182



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- **“Maximum PPE” (Protective Eyewear, N95 mask, Gloves and Protective Gown)** will be worn for ANY patient that requires close physical contact (lift assists, moving a patient which requires the patient and provider to have close body contact).
- All patient evaluations will be conducted in accordance to the *Houston Fire Department Patient Care Guidelines and Standing Orders for BLS and ALS Units* including *Section 7.01 C.4.d*, "Vital signs will be measured on all patients to include blood pressure, pulse rate and respiratory rate and **temperature**."

The goal of the above directives is to reduce member exposure and to be prudent in the usage of Department resources.

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



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