

Vermont EMS Information Memorandum

TO: Vermont Emergency Providers, Service Leaders, District Medical Advisors

CC: Daniel Wolfson, MD - State EMS Medical Director

FROM: Dan Batsie, Chief of EMS, Vermont Department of Health

DATE: March 27, 2020

Subject: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Personal Protective Equipment Update

SUMMARY – Recent contact tracing of COVID-19 exposures in Vermont has demonstrated a challenge in rapidly and accurately identifying risk in emergency response situations. In the interest of first keeping responders safe and also sustaining the public safety workforce, the Vermont Department of Health is therefore updating its Emergency Responder Personal Protective Equipment Guidance with the following guidance:

PROCEDURE:

Responders who will have close contact (less than 6 feet) with any potential emergency medical patient should don the following personal protective equipment before making contact:

- **Facemask**
 - **N95 respirators that offer a higher level of protection should be used instead of a facemask when in the presence of a confirmed COVID-19 case or when performing or present for an aerosol-generating procedure.**
- **Eye protection (i.e., goggles or disposable face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face). Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are NOT considered adequate eye protection.**
- **A single pair of disposable patient examination gloves. Change gloves if they become torn or heavily contaminated.**
- **Isolation gown.**
 - **Prioritize gowns for aerosol-generating procedures, care activities where splashes and sprays are anticipated, and high-contact patient care activities that provide opportunities for transfer of pathogens to the hands and clothing of EMS clinicians (e.g., moving patient onto a stretcher).**

Please note that CDC guidelines consider a facemask equivalent to an N-95 respirator when assigning risk to a potential COVID-19 contact. Using a mask instead of an N-95 respirator would not change isolation recommendations.

For more specific information regarding EMS interaction with COVID-19 please visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html>.

If there are any questions about this guidance, please feel free to contact the Vermont EMS office.