

	Manual	EMS
	Section (Department)	EMS
	Title	COVID-19 Response
	Number	
	First Approved Date	3/2020
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	Most Recent Review	

I. PURPOSE

To set procedures for a response to a suspected COVID-19 patient.

II. SCOPE

These procedures will be followed by EMS personnel when responding to suspected COVID-19 patients. These procedures may also be applied when responding to a situation where the patient(s) may be experiencing some other type of virulent disease.

III. PROCEDURE

1) Determining a COVID-19 Patient

Reno County Dispatch has a set list of questions for a suspected COVID-19 patient. If these answers indicate the possibility that the patient may have been exposed to COVID-19, Dispatch will give a “Signal 12” on the radio when the call is paged. Reno County EMS personnel should also ask screening questions regarding travel and exposure to COVID-19 in patients with fever, cough, or flu-like symptoms. Screening and assessments are recommended to begin from a distance of 6 feet or more from the patient until exposure risk level can be determined or appropriate PPE has been donned.

2) Response

EMS responses to a “Signal 12” situation will be based off determinate codes per policy EMS192. The on-duty EMS Division Chief will be contacted by phone for any suspected COVID-19 response.

3) Operations

Reno County EMS may consider making phone contact with the patient or another individual within the building to assess the situation and to keep them aware of what is taking place based off assessed level of risk and current patient complaints and status. It is reasonable for a single provider to enter the residence and initiate patient contact and assessment in high risk exposure situations.

If at any time there is reasonable suspicion that a patient may be infected, Reno County EMS established PPE guidelines will be followed including the use of:

- Eye Protection (Goggles or Faceshield)
- Gloves
- Gown
- N-95 Mask

The above listed PPE will be used during all patient contact including the attendant during transport if an infected patient is suspected. Crew members will properly dispose of all PPE prior to entering the cab of the unit regardless of transport. Alcohol-based sanitizer will be utilized after disposing of PPE.

In most cases, hospitalization is not required and isolation at home is recommended. Infected patients may be released to continue care at home and initiate isolation after evaluation by Reno County EMS personnel with or without

consult by Hutchinson Regional Medical Center ER physician in cases with mild symptoms. Reno County EMS personnel will have information regarding the illness, care at home, and follow up care available for patients that are recommended to isolate. In the event that Reno County EMS recommends care at home and isolation, the On-Duty Division Chief will be contacted and will subsequently contact the Community Health Officer/Reno County Health Department via phone.

If transport by EMS is indicated, Hutchinson Regional Medical Center ER should be contacted as soon as reasonably possible to advise of the transport of any suspected infectious patient. The patient will be taken directly to HRMC ER room 18. No family members will be allowed to accompany patients during transport of suspected infected individuals.

4) Cleaning/Disinfecting

The following are general guidelines for cleaning or maintaining EMS transport vehicles and equipment after contact with a suspected infected patient:

- After transporting the patient, leave the rear doors of the transport vehicle open to allow for sufficient air changes to remove potentially infectious particles.
 - The time to complete transfer of the patient to the receiving facility and complete all documentation should provide sufficient air changes.
- When cleaning the vehicle, EMS clinicians should wear a disposable gown and gloves. A face shield or facemask and goggles should also be worn if splashes or sprays during cleaning are anticipated.
- Ensure that environmental cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly. Doors should remain open when cleaning the vehicle.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., using cleaners and water to pre-clean surfaces prior to applying an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product's label) are appropriate.
 - Approved cleaning agents used by Reno County EMS include Sani-Cloths and Virex.

5) Information

Hutchinson Regional Medical Center PIO, Chuck Welch, will be responsible for all media questions and releases. At no time will any Reno County EMS personnel make any comments related to the response.

6) COVID-19 Facts

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people. The COVID-19 virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

COVID-19 is a virus with reported illnesses ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness with a small percentage of cases resulting in death.

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 14 days after exposure to COVID-19, however the average is 5 days.

Early signs include:

- Fever
- Cough

- Fatigue
- Shortness of Breath

Over time the illness may become increasingly severe and may include signs and symptoms of:

- Severe Pneumonia
- Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)
- Sepsis
- Septic Shock

Treatment

The treatment of COVID-19 consists of supportive care and symptom management:

- Providing fluids
- Maintaining blood pressure
- Providing oxygen as needed
- Treatment for any additional symptoms or complaints