



**REGULATORY/ MEDICAL HEALTH SERVICES**

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TO: Orange County Law Enforcement Agencies  
FROM: Carl H. Schultz, MD, FACEP, OCEMS Medical Director

*CHS*

RE: COVID-19 Overview for Law Enforcement

As COVID-19 spreads through the community, there is increased concern about potential first responder exposure to individuals who may have this disease. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) have established guidelines that detail precautions for first responder personnel who contact an individual confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19.

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

These guidelines pertain to EMS providers but may also be followed by first responder law enforcement personnel. Specific guidance for law enforcement responders from the CDC can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-law-enforcement.html>

Avoid exposure: The major emphasis is routine hygienic practices to protect oneself from exposure.

- Social distancing (at least 6 feet),
- Proper hand washing, not touching one's face, and encouraging/practicing coughing etiquette
- **It is also encouraged that law enforcement avoid contact with potential COVID-19 patients when possible, allowing trained EMS providers to assess and transport.**

When contact must be made with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patient: Personnel should use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

- Disposable exam gloves, eye protection, any NIOSH-approved respirator (N95 or above), and disposable gown/coveralls.
- There may be situations where gowns/coveralls and/or gloves are not practical to use in the field. In these cases, after contact it is important to clean one's hands properly, clean and disinfect the duty belt and gear, and contain and launder the uniform.

It is advised that law enforcement personnel who are not in the field follow the CDC guidance for workplace precautions.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

More information related to correctional facilities can be found at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation: [www.cdcr.ca.gov/covid19/](http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/covid19/)

Frequently asked questions:

- How would I know if a patient is a possible COVID-19 patient?
  - All PSAPs have received guidance on screening procedures
  - Information regarding suspicion of illness should be provided to field responders
- What should a deputy/police officer do if they are exposed to an infected individual in the field?
  - Report it as you would any exposure. If the patient is an EMS patient, a policy exists for hospitals to assist with evaluation (See OCEMS Policy 330.96)
  - Testing would be determined by the healthcare provider
  - There are no designated COVID-19 hospitals
- If a department member is exposed, where will they be quarantined?
  - This would be up to the healthcare provider and Orange County Public Health
  - Quarantine or isolation is determined based on individual circumstances and risk surrounding the possible exposure

The situation with the COVID-19 outbreak is dynamic and guidance may change rapidly. Further information and advice on the COVID-19 pandemic can be found on the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.