



County of San Diego

Jeff Collins
DIRECTOR
(858) 974-5924
Fax (858) 467-9662

PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP
SAN DIEGO COUNTY FIRE
SAN DIEGO COUNTY EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OFFICE
5510 Overland Avenue, Suite 250, San Diego, CA 92123-1239
www.SanDiegoCountyEMS.com

ANDREW (ANDY) PARR
EMS ADMINISTRATOR
Deputy Director, Departmental Operations
(619) 285-6429

December 23, 2021

EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR URGES CONTINUED PROTECTIVE MEASURES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

With the increasing percentage of the highly-transmissible Omicron variant, and upcoming holiday celebrations, it is more important than ever to be sure that you and your loved ones are vaccinated against COVID-19 (and boosted, as soon as eligible). County health officials urge all first responders and other healthcare workers to do their part to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Here are actions to take to protect yourself, your family, and your community:

- Get vaccinated and get a booster as soon as you qualify. Make an appointment or find an open site by calling (833) 422-4255 or visiting the [California vaccination appointment system \(myturn.ca.gov\)](https://myturn.ca.gov).
- Wear a mask, especially in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status. In order to protect yourself, your coworkers, and your household members, use a surgical mask or N-95 respirator/equivalent instead of cloth facial coverings. This is especially important while in enclosed spaces, like fire stations and dispatch centers.
- If you have any symptoms¹ or have traveled, get tested - whether you've been vaccinated or not. Testing information is available [here \(coronavirus-sd.com\)](https://coronavirus-sd.com). Remember that asymptomatic/pre-symptomatic transmissions occur, and many people are unable to identify the source of their infections.
- **Implement best practices in fire stations or other indoor workplaces.**
Actions to take to reduce virus transmission include:
 - spread out chairs and recliners in the station
 - stagger mealtimes
 - consider web-based, ready-for-pick-up grocery orders
 - don't share snacks, training materials, or other items during meetings
 - crack the window while driving to improve ventilation in the vehicle
 - transition meetings, including morning briefings, to web platforms like FaceTime or Microsoft Teams
 - institute cold turnovers at shift change
- Continue to practice the "3Ws" (1) Wash your hands, (2) Wear your mask, and (3) Walk away (maintain at least 6 feet from others).

It is essential to continue adhering to basic public health measures to curb the spread of this very contagious virus. These non-pharmaceutical interventions include masking and social distancing.

¹ Early symptoms may be mild, like a scratchy throat. Please see the current CDC guidance [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing).

Masking remains particularly important because the Omicron variant appears to be *much more* transmissible than the Delta variant, leading to drastically increased viral spread. The COVID-19 pandemic remains a grave threat to San Diego's first responder and healthcare resources.

We continue to encourage EMS providers to exercise extra diligence to their health and safety, both on- and off-duty. Case numbers are rapidly accelerating. Your actions can help mitigate this real and ongoing threat. Your patients, families, and the entire community are depending on you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristi Koenig". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office
San Diego County Fire

cc: Eric McDonald, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer
Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH, Public Health Officer
Jeff Collins, Director
Andy Parr, EMS Administrator