



County of San Diego

NICK MACCHIONE, FACHE
AGENCY DIRECTOR

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
6255 MISSION GORGE ROAD, MAIL STOP S-555
SAN DIEGO, CA 92120-3599
(619) 285-6429 • FAX (619) 285-6531

NICK YPHANTIDES, M.D., M.P.H.
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER

June 26, 2020

EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR URGES CONTINUED CAUTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As you are aware, San Diego County has seen a serious uptick in COVID-19 cases. Many California fire and EMS agencies have seen an increase in exposed and infected staff. The COVID-19 pandemic's resurgence is a threat to San Diego's critical first responder and healthcare resources.

Our community needs us to be ready and able to respond. Exposure to the COVID-19 virus in the course of our work is likely and we do not want to become vectors of the virus to the general public, colleagues, friends, or family. In addition, we cannot afford to lose EMS providers to disease or to quarantine restrictions; the protection of our first responders is of critical importance. We must also set an example and model life-saving behaviors in our community.

We re-emphasize the importance of **maintaining all social distancing measures**. For all EMS providers, this means whenever possible – *and not required as part of emergency responses* – to:

- Avoid public places where physical distancing cannot be strictly maintained, including limiting all non-essential on-duty public visits
- Stay away from public gatherings such as movie theaters, sporting events, bars/nightclubs, concerts, recreational events, houses of worship, and other places where groups of people assemble, where unable to exercise physical distancing
- Eliminate all non-essential travel
- Protect yourself at work and off duty using appropriate PPE, masks/facial coverings, and frequent handwashing/hand sanitizing
- Do not participate in home gatherings with non-family members, including over holidays

We recognize that EMS providers are called to public venues daily as a member of the emergency response system, and these recommendations should not be interpreted as a directive to avoid professional duties. Instead, we encourage EMS providers to exercise extra diligence to their safety both on and off the job. Remember the **“3Ws” – (1) Wash your hands, (2) Wear your mask/face covering, and (3) Walk away (maintain at least 6 feet from others).**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for [EMS providers](#) and [healthcare personnel](#) are continuously updated. All healthcare personnel should review these recommendations regularly.

Respectfully,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director
Emergency Medical Services
County of San Diego Health & Human Services Agency

cc: Nick Yphantides, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer
Andrew Parr, EMS Administrator