



County of San Diego

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SAFE EMS HANDOFF AT RECEIVING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Best practices for management of the COVID-19 outbreak are dynamic due to the rapidly evolving situation and changing scientific knowledge. 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.

There are unique hazards associated with treating known or suspected COVID-19 patients in the prehospital setting. To mitigate these hazards, the County has encouraged several modifications, including limiting aerosol-generating procedures whenever possible and masking all EMS patients at initial encounter. In the interests of provider safety, these practices should be extended during transfer of care at the receiving emergency department. Protection of EMS and ED personnel while optimizing patient treatment are important goals of care.

To ensure safe EMS/ED transfer of care, County guidance includes:

- EMS should make early destination notification (especially important for incidents with short transport times)
- EMS should work cooperatively with receiving ED staff to balance crew safety and patient care
- EMS may anticipate discontinuing or modifying respiratory therapies and aerosol-generating procedures
- EDs accepting prehospital patients should identify resuscitation areas (within or outside the ED) that are available for immediate acceptance of critical patients

Thank you for your continued support and attention to managing this unprecedented event.

Respectfully,

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