

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Guidance: Paramedic Services

Version 3 - April 1, 2020

Highlights of changes

- Incorporation of new case definition
- New COVID-19 Screening Tool for Paramedics
- New personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance

This guidance provides basic information only. It is not intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Additional information for paramedics can be found in the [Training Bulletin No. 120 – Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) and in the [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Paramedics](#).

Please check the Ministry of Health (MOH) COVID-19 website regularly for updates to this document, the latest case definition, FAQs, and other pertinent information: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/2019_guidance.aspx.

Active and Passive Screening

1. The latest case definition for screening is available on the MOH [COVID-19 website](#).
2. Central Ambulance Communications Centres (CACC)/Ambulance Communications Officers (ACO) are conducting active screening for COVID-19 and will communicate results with paramedics and receiving facilities.
3. Paramedics should also screen for COVID-19 using the latest “COVID-19 Screening Tool for Paramedics”, which can be found on the Emergency Health Services (EHS) [website](#), and communicate the results to CACC/ACO and receiving facility.

Note: ACOs in CACCs are conducting a supplemental screening test based on the Febrile Respiratory Enteric Illness (FREI) screening tool. A person who tests positive or any person who has self-identified that they may have visited or been in contact with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 will be screened via this tool.

CACC screening over the phone:

- When a suspect patient is identified by the CACC, the CACC will notify the responding paramedics crew.
- The responding paramedics should be appropriately protected using Droplet and Contact Precautions.
- The CACC will determine the destination emergency department based on the acuity of the patient.

Active paramedic screening on scene:

- If a patient screens positive on scene, they should be instructed to wear a surgical/procedure mask (if tolerated).
- When conducting point of care risk assessments, paramedics should consider that transmission of COVID-19 can occur through direct or indirect contact, droplet and possibly when performing aerosol-generating procedures.
- Paramedics should notify the ACO and attempt to notify the receiving facility of probable cases so that precautions can be taken for the arrival of the patient.

Testing for COVID-19

4. All testing for COVID-19 will take place in hospitals or arranged in consultation with the [local public health unit](#).

Reporting

5. COVID-19 is a designated disease of public health significance (O. Reg. 135/18) and thus reportable under the [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#).
6. Health workers should contact their local public health unit to report a probable or confirmed case.

Health & Safety

7. If transporting or caring for a suspected COVID-19 patient, emergency service providers should use Droplet and Contact Precautions (surgical/procedure mask, long sleeved gown, gloves and eye protection). A fluid-resistant N95 respirator should only be used to perform aerosol-generating medical procedures.
8. If the initial assessment and triage by Emergency Department (ED) staff indicates that COVID-19 is suspected, the paramedics should continue Droplet and Contact Precautions (surgical/procedure mask, long sleeved gown, gloves and eye protection) until environmental cleaning and decontamination of the ambulance have been completed. These environmental cleaning and decontamination processes will be conducted according to local paramedic service policies.
9. Paramedic Services can consult [Patient Care and Transportation Standards](#) for additional information on infection prevention and control..
10. Detailed general occupational health and safety guidelines for COVID-19 are available on the Ministry of Health [COVID-19 website](#).