

START CLEAN, FINISH CLEAN

What is Saanich Emergency Services doing to limit the spread of COVID-19?

The purpose of this communication is to provide residents with an update on the precautions being taken by Saanich emergency services during the COVID-19 situation. The methods and guidelines below follow the start clean, finish clean principle.

Internally, the department continues to ensure staff to follow best practice for prevention of disease spread and avoiding exposure.

START CLEAN, FINISH CLEAN

Equipment

- Clean and disinfect all 'high touch' hard surfaces in the apparatus and all medical equipment at the beginning of every shift as part of the pre-trip routine and leave your apparatus and equipment clean after every shift.

Stations

- Clean and disinfect all hard surfaces at the beginning of every shift.
- Emphasis on kitchen surfaces, door handles, alarm room, offices, computer keyboards, mice, etc.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- The minimum PPE for all medical incidents are gloves and glasses.
- Members are to carry N95 masks with them at all times for personal situations where you are likely to aerosol bodily fluids.
- Extreme care should be taken when suiting into PPE to avoid cross contamination.

Incidents

- Personnel always use appropriate PPE, medical gloves, glasses and have N95 masks available for use during close contact and assessments of patients that are presenting clinical features of an infectious respiratory virus such as: fever, coughing, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.
- Personnel ensure proper personal care, hand cleaning and decontamination of equipment and apparatus prior to leaving scene. Upon return to quarters, personnel ensure crew, equipment and apparatus are thoroughly disinfected.

Scene assessments

BCEHS in conjunction with Provincial Health Authority has provided some clinical features and epidemiologic criteria as it relates to COVID-19 and emergency personnel will consider during patient assessments.

Personnel minimize unnecessary exposure to the patient until the patient assessment is completed.

After an incident, if there has been an exposure, personnel will:

- Advise their Platoon Captain;
- Remove any contamination;
- Platoon Captain will advise Fire Dispatch and contact the on call Duty Chief; The on call Duty Chief will contact BCAS and Vancouver Island Coastal Health to advise them of the exposure and to ensure proper follow up and testing of patient through the Medical Health Officer (MHO).

What is being done to minimize the spread of the virus?

At an incident personnel will:

- wear proper PPE
- put a surgical mask on the patient to prevent transmission (not a N95 mask)
- use PPE during all patient contacts

At the station personnel will:

- wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- disinfect equipment and apparatus at the beginning of each shift
- stay home if they are sick
- when coughing or sneezing, cover their mouth and nose with arms or tissues to reduce the spread of germs
- immediately dispose of any tissues that have been used into the garbage as soon as possible and wash hands afterwards