

## MEMO

To: EMS Agencies and Clinicians  
From: Kurt Bloomstrand, MD, FAAEM, FACEP  
Date: January 25, 2020  
Re: 2019 Novel Coronavirus – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health officials have identified a new (novel) coronavirus (2019-nCoV) as the cause of an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, which has led to a number of confirmed and suspected cases and several deaths in China. There have been cases identified in several Asian countries and two confirmed cases with other potential cases under investigation in the United States. At this time, the potential risk of infection of the US population, including health care practitioners such as EMS clinicians is low. While the risk is low, this is a serious and evolving situation.

Coronaviruses are common throughout the world and typically cause mild to moderate illness. The 2019 novel Coronavirus (2019- nCoV) is a member of this family, which includes SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV which can lead to severe illness. Limited human-to-human transmission has been observed with an incubation period of about 6 to 14 days. Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- the air by coughing and sneezing
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands
- rarely, fecal contamination

Routine exposure control precautions will offer protection to first responders. EMS clinicians are advised to maintain a high index of suspicion in patients who present with fever and respiratory symptoms with a travel history to Wuhan, China.

More cases are likely to be identified in the coming days, including more cases in the United States. Given what has occurred previously with MERS and SARS, it's likely that person-to-person spread will continue to occur.

If you are evaluating a patient with symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing, fever), follow the **“Identify, Isolate, Inform”** process:



## Identify

Clinical Features	Epidemiologic Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Fever</li><li>-and/or-</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough, difficulty breathing)</li></ul>	<p>In the last <u>14 days</u> before symptom onset, have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> History of travel from Wuhan City, China</li><li>-or-</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Close contact<sup>1</sup> with a person who is under investigation for 2019-nCoV while that person was ill.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup>Close contact is defined by being within 6 feet, or within the room or care area, of a novel coronavirus case for a prolonged period of time while not wearing recommended PPE (e.g. gowns, gloves, N-95 mask, eye protection)

## Isolate

- Place a surgical mask on the patient as soon as they meet the above criteria.
- Don airborne precaution PPE: gloves, fluid-resistant gown, N-95 face mask and eye protection.

## Inform

- Notify the receiving hospital of potential infection as soon as possible to allow for emergency department preparation.
- For patients refusing treatment or transport, contact online medical control.

The most up- to-date information can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/>.

Sincerely,

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EMS Medical Director  
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