



Firefighter Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Quick Sheet

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Firefighter Guidance

What are the top key messages fire personnel should know?

- COVID-19 is a respiratory illness.
- The virus causing COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets among close contacts (within 6 feet). Respiratory droplets are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can land on surfaces, in the mouths or noses, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs of people who are nearby.

Close contact includes:

- Being within approximately 6 feet or less of an individual with COVID-19 for a prolonged time without appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Having direct contact with infectious secretions (such as phlegm and respiratory droplets) from an individual with COVID-19 without appropriate personal protective equipment.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Symptoms can include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and shortness of breath.
- Data suggests that symptoms may appear in as few as 2 days, or as long as 14 days, after exposure.

How do you protect yourself from exposure?

- Remain vigilant in treating all responses as potential COVID-19 exposures (i.e. CO alarms, odor investigations, illegal burn complaints, car accidents, fire alarms in a congregate living, etc.). Even though the nature of the call may not be medical-related, there is still potential for responding to a COVID-19 environment (i.e. COVID-19 patient under quarantine, person under investigation, etc.).
- Have personal protective equipment (PPE) on fire apparatus. If PPE is needed, “don” self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and turnout gear for protection.
- Make initial contact with **any** person in public at 6 feet away and rule out any COVID-19 symptoms or risks before approaching without PPE.
 - This means asking people if they have breathing problems or a fever from 6 feet away.
- Clean and disinfect turnout gear after use according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Consider modifying daily operations to limit the amount of personnel that respond on a call safely (i.e. routine operational calls). Every time personnel are out in the public; they take the risk of COVID-19 exposure.
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face. When, possible ensure only trained personnel wearing appropriate PPE have contact with individuals who have or may have COVID-19.
- Learn your employer’s plan for exposure control.

Recommended PPE:

If fire department personnel MUST make contact with individuals confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, they should follow [CDC's guidance for EMS](#) if possible. Donning a SCBA and turnout gear may be necessary to perform operational duties. This alternative must provide protection that is at least as great as the minimum amount of PPE recommended.

Minimum PPE recommended is:

- Gloves (single layer)
- Disposable gown or single use/disposable coveralls
Surgical mask
- Eye protection (i.e. goggles, disposable face shield that fully covers front & side of the face)

If close contact with a COVID-19 individual occurs during a response:

- Clean and disinfect turnout gear prior to reuse according to the gear manufacturer recommendations and refer to the links below.
 - [Recommended Guidelines for Selection, Care, and Cleaning/ Sanitization of Structural Fire Fighting Protective Clothing.](#)
 - [COVID-19 PPE Decontamination Recommendations Quick-Reference Infographic](#)
- Even though turnout gear may not appear contaminated, it is necessary to follow the operating procedure for containing and laundering of gear. Avoid shaking gear.
- Follow standard operating procedures for containment and disposal of any used PPE.

If an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 requires medical evaluation, contact EMS. Do not transport them in a vehicle or apparatus.

What if a firefighter is asked to drive an EMS vehicle with a COVID-19 patient?

- Before entering the **ISOLATED** (completely enclosed) EMS driver's compartment, firefighters should remove and dispose of PPE and perform hand hygiene to avoid soiling the driver's compartment.
- Before entering the **NON- ISOLATED** (open window or door) EMS driver's compartment, firefighters should remove their shield or goggles, gown and gloves, turnout gear, S.C.B.A. and perform hand hygiene. A surgical mask should be worn or continue to be worn during transport.

Fire Apparatus Decontamination Procedures

- COVID-19 infected droplets may be able to live on surfaces.
- The public, regardless of whether they have COVID-19, should not be transported in fire apparatus.
- When cleaning these apparatuses, fire suppression crews should utilize an approved disinfectant to sanitize all touch surfaces in the apparatus.