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 **Dayton MMRS Public Health - GMVEMSC**

**Dayton & Montgomery County**

**COVID-19 Bulletin 7:**

**Mask Use by Public Safety Personnel and Others**

Based on new directives from the CDC, guidance from Ohio EMS (attached), and recommendations by IAFF and local hospitals, public safety should implement the following:

* Anyone who is transported or even briefly placed in **any public safety vehicle (cruisers, ambulances, etc.)** will be given a mask and directed to put it on, covering both their nose and mouth.
	+ Although this may not be feasible with persons placed under arrest, attempt to mask everyone you can without increasing your risk of contamination.
* **All** EMS patients are to be given a surgical mask (also called an isolation mask).
* To conserve professional masks, give cloth masks made locally to citizens when they enter public safety vehicles for any reason other than as patient.
	+ Locally made masks must be laundered before use.
	+ Work with your county EMA or public health department to attempt to obtain additional cloth and surgical masks as needed.
* Law enforcement (LE) and EMS personnel should wear cloth or surgical masks while on duty, including while in shared areas in stations, in public, and anytime you are in your vehicle unless you are alone (or alone in the ambulance cab if it is physically separated from the patient compartment).
	+ Following extended use guidelines (also attached), each surgical mask is to be used until it is soiled, contaminated, damaged, or hard to breathe through.
	+ Do not touch outer surfaces of the mask while working.
	+ Mask removal and replacement must be done carefully and deliberately, consistent with CDC donning and doffing PPE guidelines.
	+ The folded mask should be stored between uses in a clean paper bag or breathable container that is marked with the name of the EMS provider or LE officer.
	+ Expect to use the same facemask for multiple encounters and multiple shifts.
	+ Cloth masks are not to be worn during patient contact.
	+ Cloth masks may be used in lieu of surgical masks while in common or public areas of police or fire stations. Similar care and use guidelines apply as the care and use of surgical masks.
	+ Cloth masks used by EMS and LE personnel should be laundered on a regular basis and following any contamination.
		- Masks may be removed when alone in a personal workspace such as a personal office or personal bunk area.
* EMS will continue to conform to the recent JITSO and only allow persons to be transported with the patient when essential to patient care.  All other requests for companion transports should be denied.
	+ Examples of companions who must be transported in EMS units include parents or guardians of minors; historians for time-critical diagnoses such as stroke; or translators when significant language barriers exist.
	+ Companions who are demonstrating infectious symptoms such as fever, cough, illness should not be transported unless being treated as an additional patient in the patient compartment.
* Especially for LEOs, if wearing gloves, use wipes or hand sanitizer on the gloves after touching anyone or anything.
* Thorough decontamination of the inside of all public safety vehicles should be performed frequently, and especially after any patient transport
* Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.

PPE conservation continues to be critical. We recognize that immediate application of this guidance may be challenging. Work with EMA and public health to cope with PPE shortages as much as feasible. Many hospitals will replace surgical masks on a one-for-one basis when bringing in a patient.

Personnel will also find that mask use for extended periods adds to the work of breathing. Cloth masks require less respiratory effort than N-95s or surgical masks, which is another reason for recommending cloth mask use in stations. When alone, take the opportunity to remove your mask and breathe freely.