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 **Dayton MMRS GMVEMSC**

**COVID-19 BULLETIN 14B: PANDEMIC UPDATES**

This information is intended for use by EMS agencies and personnel. Use of any or all of this bulletin is at the discretion of each agency.

The pandemic is not over. COVID-19 is a horrific disease that has killed hundreds of thousands of Americans, left others disabled, and sickened millions more. We are now dealing with a nationwide resurgence, fueled in part by the Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

CDC uses four levels of Community Transmission (in ascending order): Low, Moderate, Substantial, or High. As of August 11, every county in the Greater Miami Valley EMS Council (GMVEMSC) Region was listed by the CDC as having Substantial or High Levels of disease transmission. Of our ten primary counties, eight were listed as High transmission; the other two were listed as Substantial. As of August 13, **every county** with GMVEMSC member agencies is listed as High transmission (Red). See <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

We strongly encourage everyone who is eligible to be vaccinated as soon as possible, and to become a “vaccine champion” who encourages others to be vaccinated.

EMS Agency Guidelines

* Supervisors should continue to monitor employees for COVID-19 symptoms, including using daily wellness checks
* Personnel should be permitted to leave work while on duty for the time needed to obtain the COVID-19 vaccination
* **Return to the practice of requiring facial coverings for ALL personnel (vaccinated or unvaccinated) while indoors and in the company of others in counties with Substantial or High transmission**
* **Return to the practice of requiring facial coverings for ALL personnel while riding in a vehicle where there is more than one occupant in counties with Substantial or High transmission**
* EMS personnel should wear surgical masks (not cloth face coverings) while in close contact (less than six feet) with others, with the exceptions listed under patient care below
* Continue to offer masks to non-agency personnel, and request that they mask
* Consider a return to virtual or remote learning platforms for trainings and meetings
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily, including tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
* Continue to require quarantine of *unvaccinated* personnel who have close contact unless wearing appropriate PPE. Close contact while wearing PPE is not considered to be an exposure. Quarantine is not required after close contact for personnel who are “fully vaccinated”
	+ Close contact is defined as spending more than 15 minutes (cumulative) in 24 hours within six feet of an infected person:
		- Within 48-hours before symptoms developed or the person received a positive test result, or
		- During the 10 days after the person developed symptoms of COVID-19, or
		- During the 10 days after a person was tested for COVID and received a positive result

All EMS Personnel Guidelines

* Continue to wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating
* Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, then throw the tissues in the trash
* Self-monitor health and be alert for symptoms of COVID-19
* Maintain social distancing when practical
* Police, fire, and EMS personnel are not required to wear a mask, even if unvaccinated, when wearing a face covering would interfere with or limit their ability to carry out their official duties or functions

Fully Vaccinated EMS Personnel Guidelines

* People are considered “fully vaccinated”
	+ 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series (e.g., Pfizer or Moderna vaccines), or
	+ 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine
	+ If you do not meet these requirements, then you are NOT fully vaccinated. Keep taking ALL [precautions](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html) until you are fully vaccinated
* Information for those who are “fully vaccinated”:
* Outdoor activities pose minimal risk to fully vaccinated people
* Infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated, even with the Delta variant
* Fully vaccinated people who become infected with the Delta variant can transmit it to others
* Follow other EMS agency guidance
* People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken the immune system should talk to their healthcare provider to discuss their activities
* Get tested if experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)

Patient Care

* **All crewmembers (regardless of vaccination status) must wear at least a surgical mask for every patient encounter**
* Unvaccinated personnel should continue to wear a surgical mask, an N95 mask, or PAPR and eye protection for all patient care interactions
* All personnel (vaccinated or not) should wear N95 or PAPR and eye protection when performing aerosol-generating procedures (AGPs), and for all patient care **inside** the ambulance or other tight spaces
* Consider use of the “scout” system (only one or two personnel in close contact with the patient or complainant)
* **ALL EMS patients** (NOT just suspected COVID-19 patients) and family members or companions are to be given surgical masks (also called isolation masks) and must be wearing masks on hospital entry
* Continue to notify hospitals as requested when transporting suspected COVID-19 patients. At the present time, Kettering Health facilities are requesting those notifications. Premier Health requests notification only for critical patients or those receiving AGPs
* Companions demonstrating infectious symptoms such as fever, cough, or other illness should not be transported unless being treated as an additional patient in the patient compartment
* Continue frequent decontamination of the inside of all public safety vehicles
* Discontinue “extended use” of masks or other PPE, including reuse and temporary storage of masks
* If a patient asks about your vaccination status while you are caring for them, you should respond respectfully, but you are not required to disclose medical, religious, or other personal information
* EMS riders/observers will follow all the same guidelines as agency/department personnel
* Continue to document all PPE use in run reports
* No changes to standard resuscitation or transport procedures are recommended at this time
* **All hospitals in our region require mask use in the hospital. EMS personnel must be masked while in hospitals**