

# NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

3/4/2020

## ***Office of the Chief of Department***

From: Chief of Department

To: All Members of the Service

Subject: Novel Coronavirus

1. Members of the service should be aware that while performing police duties, they may encounter a variety of communicable diseases and infectious agents. Basic infection prevention precautions should be utilized when coming in contact with any individual regardless of his/her apparent state of health. These precautions include: avoiding unnecessary exposure and maintaining a safe distance as operationally feasible, wearing personal protective equipment when necessary, washing hands frequently, and using hand sanitizer. By taking these precautions, members will guard themselves against more common infections, such as influenza, as well as emerging infections, such as Novel Coronavirus, also referred to as COVID-19.

2. COVID-19 is a disease that recently emerged in China, which causes respiratory illness in humans and can spread from person to person. The spread of the virus has been occurring largely in China, and, to a more limited extent, other countries.

3. At this time, it is unknown how easily COVID-19 is transmitted between people or whether only those exhibiting the symptoms of infection can spread the virus. Public health authorities are concerned that infected individuals not showing symptoms could spread the infection. Symptoms of COVID-19 can appear within 2 – 14 days of exposure, and usually include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

4. Members of the service should be aware of the aforementioned symptoms and of other factors that elevate the risk of COVID-19, such as:

- a. Any international travel in past 14 days,
- b. Contact with any ill person who has traveled internationally in the past 14 days,
- c. Contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19,
- d. Work in or visit to a healthcare facility that treated patients with COVID-19.

Any persons exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and answering affirmatively to the above questions may be considered a potential case of COVID-19.

5. Members of the service may come into contact with persons who have contracted or who are suspected of having contracted COVID-19 in a variety of ways, including responding to an aided case. In addition to all other relevant procedures, members will adhere to the following procedure when handling a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19:

## **Uniformed Member of the Service**

1. Respond to the scene when directed to do so and ensure the response of EMS.
  - a. In the event of a pick-up event or a radio run NOT initially coded as an COVID-19 aided case, ensure Communications Section dispatcher is notified via landline.

*Note: When informed via landline of a COVID-19 case, Communications Section dispatcher must immediately notify the patrol supervisor to respond directly to the scene.*

2. Remain outside the location, if possible, confer with EMS, and limit access to the location to necessary emergency medical personnel only.
  - a. If it is necessary to enter the location due to police action, use available personal protective equipment (e.g. disposable gloves, face mask, etc.), and withdraw from inside location immediately once the scene has been stabilized.
3. Request the response of the patrol supervisor.
4. Prepare an Aided Report in FORMS in all cases of confirmed or suspected COVID-19.
  - a. Ascertain from EMS the number of occupants or residents at the location, especially children and elderly, and record information on Aided Report.

### **Patrol Supervisor**

5. Respond to the scene, remain outside the location if possible, and confer with the assigned member of the service and EMS.
6. Request response of EMS supervisor, if not already present.
7. Request additional information regarding the aided individual from Communications Division dispatcher and EMS personnel, including but not limited to:
  - a. The aided's recent travel history,
  - b. Any other pertinent information pertaining to potential opportunities for transmission (e.g. location where the aided works, attends school, etc.).
8. Notify: desk officer, commanding officer/executive officer/duty captain, patrol borough, and operations division.

*Note: If EMS transports an COVID-19 aided to hospital, the assigned member of the service will not accompany the aided in the body of the ambulance. The aided and other members of the household should NOT be transported in a Department vehicle or brought to a Department facility. Members of the service will not respond to the hospital unless directed by the patrol supervisor/competent authority.*

*If a prisoner or other person in police custody has contracted or is suspected of having contracted COVID-19, isolate and contain the individual to the extent possible, immediately make all required notifications, and await instructions from the Operations Division/competent authority before transporting any other prisoners who may have been exposed, etc. Desk*

*officers/supervisors must identify and document all prisoners who may have been exposed to or come in contact with the individual suspected of the COVID-19 virus.*

**Commanding Officer/Executive Officer/Duty Captain**

9. Respond to scene and assume command.

10. Confer with ranking supervisors and ensure that proper safety measures are being taken, and that all required notifications are made.

11. Prepare Unusual Occurrence Report and endorse one copy DIRECT to Operations and one copy through channels.

**Additional Data**

*All members of the service who come in close contact with persons who have contracted or who are suspected of having contracted COVID-19 should immediately wash their hands with soap and water and are reminded not to touch their face or any mucous membranes. If a member suspects he/she has been exposed to COVID-19, immediately notify the Medical Division and comply with Patrol Guide 205-10, "Exposure of Members of the Service to Infectious Diseases or Hazardous Materials."*

*The Medical Division may be reached 24 hours per day at (718) 760-7600. They can provide up to date information on COVID-19 and will also be available to answer any medical questions.*

*Members of the service on assignments in public areas of hospitals, emergency rooms, and patient rooms, should be guided by the medical staff on hand regarding any additional safety precautions to be taken.*

For your NECESSARY ATTENTION.