



Position Statement on COVID-19

*Approved by the IAFCCP Board of Directors
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Background

The International Association of Flight and Critical Care Paramedics (IAFCCP) recognizes the significance of proper infection control and prevention strategies. Communicable disease mitigation in the critical care transport environment is a grave safety concern and should be regarded as such. As the number of cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) continues to increase exponentially across the globe, so does the chances of transporting infected patients.

COVID-19 is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). This is a previously unknown strain of coronavirus, a common virus known to infect both human and animal population. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, lethargy, myalgia, and dry cough. Some patients may experience, nasal congestion, rhinorrhea, pharyngitis, or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.

According to the World Health Organization, most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 out of every 6 people with COVID-19 develops dyspnea requiring pharmaceuticals, and 1 out of 30 will require ICU level care. Elderly patients and those with significant comorbidities are more likely to develop serious illness. The reported case-fatality rate (CFR) is between 1 and 2 percent.

In the wake of this current global pandemic the IAFCCP implores programs to follow infection control standards outlined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and local policies and procedures. **The most important step in this process is proper hand hygiene.**

IAFCCP Positions

- The IAFCCP recommends clinicians wash their hands with soap and water often, including before and after all patient contacts. If soap and water is not readily available a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be utilized.
- The IAFCCP recommends following current CDC recommendations for the care of the suspected COVID-19 patient, which mimic that of any suspected communicable disease, and include utilization of an N-95 or higher-level respirator or facemask as well as the utilization of eye protection, exam gloves, and an isolation gown.
- The IAFCCP recommends that vehicle operators and pilots that provide direct patient care (e.g., moving patients onto stretchers) should wear all recommended PPE. After completing patient care and before entering an isolated driver's compartment, the vehicle operator should remove and dispose of PPE and perform hand hygiene to avoid soiling the compartment. If the transport vehicle does not have an isolated driver's compartment, the vehicle operator should remove the face shield or goggles, gown and

gloves and perform hand hygiene. A respirator or facemask should continue to be used during transport.

- The IAFCCP recommends that transport personnel notify the receiving healthcare facility prior to their arrival and should keep the suspected COVID-19 patient separated from other people as much as possible.
- The IAFCCP recommends that family and other contacts should not be allowed to ride in the transport vehicle unless absolutely necessary, in which case those individuals should also wear a facemask.

Additional Information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-issues/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>