



State of Maryland

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TO: EMSOP Highest Jurisdictional Officials (JAC)  
EMSOP Medical Directors

FROM: Timothy Chizmar, MD, FACEP

DATE: March 13, 2020

SUBJECT: Screening of Persons with Possible Emerging Infectious Diseases  
Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In light of recently documented community transmission of COVID-19 in Maryland and in the interest of responder safety, 9-1-1 Specialists in Maryland should begin screening for *potential* patients who may be infected with Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) as soon as possible.

In consultation with my office, a memo was sent to all Maryland PSAP directors earlier today from Mr. Ross Coates, Chairman of the Emergency Communications Committee of the Maryland Association of Counties.

The following information reflects technical recommendations for Maryland PSAPs to initiate screening and notification of first responders for all patients with fever or cough, regardless of travel. While travel may contribute to elevated risk, it is insufficient to exclude a person from being a potential person under investigation (PUI) for COVID-19. Therefore, we recommend removing the travel questions and replacing with questions focused on fever or cough as noted below.

This may be accomplished using locally defined policy and by use of the Priority Dispatch Emerging Infectious Disease Tool. Guidelines for implementation are described below.

**Local Policy/Directive for Fire and Police related events:**

Agencies should utilize the following process outlined below when screening Fire and Police events which generate a response:

*Upon receipt of a request for service which generates a response, the call takers will follow the general call taking procedures until such time pre-arrival instructions have been provided. Once instructions have been provided the 9-1-1 Specialist shall ask the following question.*

**QUESTION 1:** *Does anyone on the scene have a fever or cough?*

*IF **Yes**; The situation has the risk to be a **Potential PUI**.*

*Responders should immediately be notified of the potential risk.*

## Medical related events - Emerging Infectious Disease Tool with Medical Director Approved Questions

Agencies who opt to use the EID Tool should configure the EID tool to ask the caller:

*“Does anyone on the scene have a fever or the presence of cough.”*

Upon receipt of a request for EMS, the 9-1-1 Specialist will follow general call taking procedures until such time that a response determinant has been reached. Once a response determinant has been reached the 9-1-1 Specialist shall initiate the EID Screen Tool.

### General

*In summary, any person on-scene of an incident who has a fever or cough has the risk to be a **POTENTIAL PUI**.*

The term **Potential PUI** shall always be used when referring to a patient with a suspected emerging infectious disease, such as COVID-19 (coronavirus).

If the patient screens positive as a **Potential PUI** or the 9-1-1 Specialist feels it is necessary, the 9-1-1 Specialist may provide the Infection Prevention Instructions.

Prompt notification shall also be made to all responding personnel using the Phrase “**Potential PUI**”.

Additional information such as signs and symptoms shall be relayed to responding units via the most discreet means available, so as not to jeopardize the safety of those on-scene or responding.

It is imperative that communications personnel continuously monitor events of this nature and relay any information relevant to the handling of incidents generating a public safety response.

For More public health information and guidance please check here for updates:

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

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