



State of Maryland  
**Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems**

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Theodore R. Delbridge, MD, MPH  
Executive Director

To: EMS Clinicians

From: Theodore Delbridge, MD, MPH *TRD*  
Executive Director

Timothy Chizmar, MD *TC*  
State EMS Medical Director

Date: December 29, 2023

Re: **Respiratory Virus Season & Masks / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

We hope that you have been enjoying the holiday season. Unfortunately, we are also in the midst of “respiratory virus season” as well. Maryland’s hospitalizations due to COVID, influenza, and RSV infections are currently greater than 10 per 100,000 residents. This exceeds the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) threshold for recommending universal source control, including use of face masks in patient care areas and patient-facing environments.

Accordingly, we advise all EMS clinicians to implement the following measures to reduce the risk of virus transmission:

- Employ universal face mask use for all clinicians and patients, as tolerated, during care encounters.
- Utilize PPE, including a fit-tested N-95 mask, eye protection, and gloves for suspected COVID infections.
- Remember to don appropriate PPE prior to performing airway procedures.
- Gowns should be utilized if there is anticipated contact with secretions or body fluids.
- Remember to wash your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.

In addition to these guidelines, EMS clinicians should continue to exercise good judgment based upon their infection prevention training.

As recommended, many health care facilities are now implementing masking requirements. Please plan accordingly, and be prepared to don a face mask prior to entry.

Please contact the Office of the Medical Director (410-706-0880; [tchizmar@miemss.org](mailto:tchizmar@miemss.org)) if you have any questions regarding this memo.