



Policy Statement

Interim Policy on the Use of Face Masks and Face Coverings in EMS Settings

PURPOSE

The purpose of this advisory is to provide updated recommendations for the use of masks and face coverings that all EMS agencies in New York should follow during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

SCOPE

This advisory **supersedes** all previous New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) guidance, recommendations, and requirements pertaining to the use of face masks and by emergency medical services (EMS) agencies in New York.

DEFINITIONS

“EMS Agency” shall mean all entities regulated under Article 30 of the Public Health Law.

“EMS Setting” shall mean any setting where healthcare is delivered by emergency medical services personnel.

“Personnel” shall mean all persons employed or affiliated with an EMS agency, whether paid or unpaid, including, but not limited to employees, members of the medical staff, contract staff, students, and volunteers, who engage in activities such that if they were infected with SARS-CoV-2, they could potentially expose patients to the virus.

POLICY

NYSDOH affirms the importance of non-pharmacological infection prevention strategies in EMS settings such as appropriate usage of well-fitting face masks. This is a vital infection prevention strategy with a sound evidence base and represents a clear infection prevention standard.

All personnel, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, in an EMS setting should wear an appropriate face mask according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s \(CDC\) Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#).

The current CDC recommendations apply regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status and are based on [Transmission Levels](#), not on COVID-19 [Community Levels](#). The above CDC recommendations applies to all persons within an EMS setting who are two (2) years of age and older and able to medically tolerate a face covering/mask.

In addition to these masking recommendations, EMS agencies are reminded of the importance of following other infection prevention and control recommendations related to COVID-19 and encouraging personnel to receive all recommended vaccinations.



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EMS agencies should develop and implement policies for masking of all persons in an EMS setting based on the CDC and NYSDOH recommendations above. Note that these policies should be at least as strict as CDC recommendations and may be stricter at the discretion of the EMS agency.

In addition to these masking recommendations, EMS agencies and personnel are reminded of the importance of following other infection prevention and control recommendations related to COVID-19.

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Issued and authorized by:

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