



NFPA 1581: INFECTION CONTROL PROGRAM RESOURCE FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Infection control is a critically important global topic right now as the world contends with COVID-19, and EMTs, paramedics, firefighters, and law enforcement officers are looking for resources to help guide them. **NFPA 1581**, *Standard on Fire Department Infection Control Program*, offers crucial, timely guidance on infection control to help keep responders—and everyone they support—safe.

While NFPA 1581 was written for fire departments, the guidance it contains is universally applicable for all responders and can be easily translated to fit any department's needs. This tip sheet provides several key takeaways based on NFPA 1581 and guidance for EMS providers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM NFPA 1581 AND CDC GUIDANCE



NFPA Designate an Infection Control Officer

Departments should have a part- or full-time employee serve as the infection control officer (ICO) to manage all aspects of infection control programs. The ICO must maintain a strong relationship with local medical and public health officials. When notified of an infectious exposure, the ICO is responsible for the notification, verification, treatment, medical follow-up, and case documentation.



NFPA Keep Clean

The most important action responders can take to limit their exposure is to carefully clean themselves and their reusable personal protective equipment (PPE). Employees should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer that is at least 60 percent alcohol as an alternative only when hand washing is not available.



NFPA **CDC** Use Personal Protective Equipment

PPE should be used based on agency policy, local protocol, and manufacturer recommendations. For the COVID-19 virus, responders should use droplet protection, which includes the following, at a minimum:

- ▶ Gloves
- ▶ Respirators (N-95/P-100 or greater)
- ▶ Eye protection
- ▶ Splash protection (gowns, face shield, etc.)



CDC Limit Exposure

Limiting exposure can reduce the need for PPE and assist in increasing staffing availability by lowering the number of high-risk exposures to department members. Some measures that can be taken to reduce exposure include—but are not limited to—the following:

- ▶ Adjust protocols so that dispatchers can request that patients await responders outside in the open air, if they are safe and able.
- ▶ Limit the number of members who interact with patients based on the patient's presentation and medical needs.
- ▶ After donning PPE, a member should stay in the PPE for the remainder of patient care activities.



NFPA 1581: INFECTION CONTROL PROGRAM RESOURCE FOR FIRST RESPONDERS *CONTINUED*



CDC Expand Options in Times of Shortage

When there are PPE shortages, departments are advised to either modify the protection levels of PPE being used for patient care and clean the equipment, or reuse the PPE after following disinfection procedures. The following recommendations are listed for departments to consider until adequate levels of PPE can be acquired:

- ▶ Instead of going down a level in respiratory protection, consider going up a level. For example, responders can use a powered air purifying respirator (PAPR) with the appropriate filter or cartridge.
- ▶ Develop protocols that allow for triaging the use of remaining higher-level PPE. For example, responders can use N-95 respirators on calls where there is a high-risk exposure level. On lower risk calls, the use of an approved lower level of protection may be more readily available.

- ▶ Increase your buying power by partnering up. Leverage your contracts, mutual aid agreements, and memorandums of understanding to work with community partners and public health officials to acquire PPE together. If that is unsuccessful, follow the National Incident Management System process for logistical requests.
- ▶ These options should only be used when PPE is at alarmingly low levels and there is no way to increase the supply and with approval from the ICO, risk management team, and/or medical director.

Learn More

Keep up with the latest news and information:

- ▶ NFPA 1581 free online viewing: nfpa.org/1581
- ▶ NFPA COVID-19 resources: nfpa.org/coronavirus
- ▶ Federal Coronavirus website: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- ▶ CDC Interim Guidance for EMS: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html
- ▶ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Office of EMS: ems.gov/projects/coronavirus_covid-19_resources.html
- ▶ International Association of Fire Chiefs: iafc.org/topics-and-tools/resources/resource/coronavirus-resources-for-fire-chiefs
- ▶ International Association of Fire Fighters: iaff.org/coronavirus
- ▶ National Volunteer Fire Council: nvfc.org/coronavirus-19-information-and-resources-for-ems
- ▶ National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians: naemt.org/initiatives/covid-19
- ▶ American Ambulance Association: ambulance.org
- ▶ World Health Organization: who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019



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