



Saratoga County EMS Council

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COVID-19 Quarantine Recommendations

Revised April 6, 2020

Sustained community transmission of COVID-19 is present in Saratoga County. All of us, including our families, should consider themselves as possibly exposed to COVID-19 and should therefore self-monitor for symptoms (see below) at least daily. **Healthcare workers** (including Fire and EMS) are at risk for unrecognized exposure within the community and at work, and therefore **should self-monitor for symptoms at least twice daily**. With sustained community exposures already occurring, quarantining asymptomatic persons to prevent exposure to others (called containment) is of little value because the likelihood is that you and everyone else have already been exposed during every day activities. The bug is out of the box.

Instead of quarantining to limit exposures between asymptomatic persons who are likely to already have been exposed, we need to **isolate symptomatic people** who are the most likely to spread disease.

For this reason, CDC and NYS DOH and Saratoga County Public Health now advise healthcare facilities to **allow asymptomatic workers to continue to work even after exposure to a confirmed positive COVID-19 patient**.

Asymptomatic healthcare workers can remain at work with twice daily symptom checks (see below). This recommendation applies even to high risk exposures defined as no PPE or PPE breach when in close contact to a positive patient during an aerosol generating procedure (CPR, intubation, nebulization). See www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html for exposure type listing. Staff with high risk exposures must wear a surgical mask while working for 14 days following the exposure. They should also maintain social distancing while at home, avoid contact with persons at risk, and consider wearing a homemade mask when near others.

If symptoms occur, members should not report to work or, if at work, immediately stop, notify their supervisor, self-isolate at home away from household members to whatever extent possible, and if symptoms are severe or worsening, telephone their healthcare provider. In contrast to those exposed who we no longer quarantine, those who are ill should be isolated for 2 reasons – once you have symptoms you are the most likely to spread disease to others and staying home with supportive flu-like care allows most people to recover. A COVID-19 test is not required because false negatives may occur and treatment would not be altered as long as symptoms are not severe or worsening.

Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID19 illness include NEW onset (twice daily):

- Measured temperature (100.4°F or greater). If a thermometer is not available, then a subjective feeling of febrile is acceptable and defined as “feeling hot compared to room temperature or your forehead feeling hot when touched by the back of your hand.”
- cough
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- flu-like symptoms

Any one of the above symptoms not attributable to a previously recognized condition should trigger medical leave.

Remember, the new norm is:

- Social distancing; staying at least 6 feet away from others
- Wash hands frequently
- Decon surfaces with an EPA approved disinfectant (www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2). Specialized decon is not needed.

Healthcare workers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should maintain isolation for at least 7 days after the onset of their illness and may return to work once they have been fever free for at least 72 hours (without use of antipyretics), with other symptoms resolving. Staff who have recovered should wear a facemask until 14 days after the onset of their illness.

If you are sick, stay home and if you are well, come to work because our County needs us more now than ever.

References:

NYC Fire Department Bureau of EMS Buckslip EMS 20-03-23, issued 3-18-2020

NYS Bureau of EMS Policy Statement 20-04 issued 3-20-2020

Saratoga County Public Health Service HCW Mandatory Quarantine Algorithm 4-6-2020