



**REGION 11
CHICAGO EMS SYSTEM
POLICY**

Title: Suspected COVID-19 Patient Triage and Transport
Section: Transportation
Approved: EMS Medical Directors Consortium
Effective: April 3, 2020

SUSPECTED COVID-19 PATIENT TRIAGE AND TRANSPORT

I. PURPOSE

- A. Identify patients that require emergency medical care and those that are appropriate for non-transport to a hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic in order to accomplish the following:
 - 1. Provide EMS services to critically ill or high risk populations
 - 2. Minimize disease transmission to the community
 - 3. Protect first responders and healthcare personnel
 - 4. Preserve healthcare system functioning when the system is overwhelmed
 - 5. Ensure proper follow-up and education of patients that are not transported by EMS

II. SUSPECTED COVID-19 TRIAGE AND TRANSPORT

- A. COVID-19 should be suspected in patients with history of fever with symptoms of **viral syndrome illness** (cough, nasal/chest congestion, sore throat, body aches).
- B. Follow “Suspected COVID-19 Protocol” for initial assessment and treatment.
- C. Continue to treat the patient per Region 11 EMS System Protocol and Policies.
- D. Triage the patient acuity based on the following established categories (see algorithm attachment)
 - 1. “Red” (Immediate)
 - a. Abnormal vital signs
 - b. Presence of emergency condition
 - 2. “Yellow” (Delayed)
 - a. High risk due to age or comorbidities
 - b. Unsafe home situation
 - 3. “Green” (Minor)
 - a. Minimal symptoms
 - b. Requesting testing
 - c. COVID-19 exposure
 - 4. “Black” (Deceased)
 - a. Cardiac arrest



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- b. Not covered on this algorithm
- E. Evaluate each COVID-19 patient with a complete assessment including the following criteria:
 - 1. **Age:**
 - a. Adult patients are > 18 years old and included in the algorithm
 - b. Pediatric patients are not covered on this algorithm
 - 2. **Vital Signs (if YES to any triage “RED”):**
 - a. Respiratory rate < 8 or > 24
 - b. Oxygen saturation < 94%
 - c. Heart rate > 110 bpm
 - d. Systolic blood pressure < 100 or > 180 mmHg
 - e. Temperature > 100.4 degrees F (if available)
 - 3. **Emergency Condition (if YES to any triage “RED”):**
 - a. Chest pain, other than mild with coughing
 - b. Shortness of breath with activity
 - c. Altered mental status
 - d. Syncope
 - e. Diaphoresis
 - f. Cyanosis
 - 4. **High Risk Factors (if YES to any triage “YELLOW”):**
 - a. Age > 60 years old
 - b. Diabetes
 - c. Pregnant
 - d. Chronic heart, lung, or kidney disease
 - e. Immunocompromised
 - 5. **Home Criteria (if NO to any triage “YELLOW”):**
 - a. Appropriate caregivers are available if needed
 - b. Patient has decision making capacity
 - c. Patient consents to non-transport
 - d. Access to food, water, and other necessities
- F. Determine triage category and transport decision
 - 1. Patients with vital sign abnormalities or emergency conditions should be triaged “Red” and transported to the closest Emergency Department with Pre-Notification.
 - 2. Patients with significant risk factors or without appropriate home criteria should be triaged “Yellow” and transported to the closest Emergency Department with Pre-Notification.



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3. For any situations where transport is indicated, but the patient refuses transport, consult Online Medical Control while on scene with the patient.
 4. Patients that do not meet criteria for vital sign abnormalities, emergency conditions, or risk factors and do meet all of the home criteria should be triaged “Green” and are appropriate for non-transport.
- G. Prior to non-transport, the following criteria are mandatory:
1. Online Medical Control is required
 2. Follow-Up Plan Established
 - a. Primary care provider follow-up available
 - b. Referral to Community Health Center if no primary care provider
 - c. Provided with CDPH COVID Information Line (312-746-4835)
 - d. Instructions to seek medical care if symptoms worsen
 3. COVID-19 Resource Packet provided
 - a. COVID Educational forms from CDPH that may include and be updated (<https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/resources.html>)
 1. What to do if you have COVID-19?
 2. What to do if you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19?
 3. What to do if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19?
 4. What to do if you don't have health insurance?
 5. Tips on managing anxiety about COVID-19?
 4. Refusal form signed by patient

Region 11 Chicago EMS Guidelines for Suspected COVID-19 Patient Triage and Transport

For adult patients with history of fever and symptoms of **viral syndrome illness** (cough, nasal/chest congestion, sore throat, body aches)

