



Guidance for Modifying EMS Response Plans during the COVID-19 Pandemic

As released previously in Operational Bulletin 2020-03-27-01 *Guidance for EMS Services regarding Continuity of Operations* (available at the Maine EMS website under Protocols, Rules & Resources > Clinical & Operational Bulletins), Maine EMS recognizes that our licensed EMS services may take the opportunity to reassess their current response plans in collaboration with their partnering transport and non-transport services. There may be opportunities for revision of these plans to allow for decreased exposure of the first responding services as well as conservation of personal protective equipment (PPE) while continuing to maintain essential services. Based on this previous bulletin, Maine EMS seeks to assist services that may consider alterations to their response in their communities with the following information for developing a response plan:

- ⇒ If a current Maine EMS licensed service (transporting or non-transporting) IS NOT altering their response to EMS calls or has an existing approved response plan that is not changing, no further action is needed.
- ⇒ If a current Maine EMS licensed service IS seeking to alter their response plan, please consider the following information:
 - Any Maine EMS services seeking to modify their response to emergency calls must follow the Maine EMS Act of 1982, Title 32, Chapter 2-B and the current Maine Bureau of EMS Rules (May 1, 2013). These documents may be found on the Maine EMS website under “Protocols, Rules & Resources” then clicking “Rules, Statutes & Resources”.
 - The response plan must clearly address the following:
 1. It explains what types of calls are anticipated to be affected by this response plan change.
 2. It meets the community need for timely response to calls that are identified through EMD as Urgent or Time-Life-Priority Calls (e.g. Charlie-, Delta-, or Echo- level calls).
 3. It meets the patient’s needs for critical EMS care interventions (e.g. in cases of active bleeding, respiratory distress, chest pain, active seizures, altered mental status, etc.).
 - Patient assessment may initially be done from a “social” distance (e.g. a “doorway” assessment), or in non-conventional manners on scene, but must always be performed.
 4. It balances the unnecessary, or minimizing of, exposure of personnel with time-critical interventions.
 5. It ensures that calls identified through EMD as non-Time-Life-Priority (e.g. Alpha- & Bravo-) will also have EMS response, assessment and transport in a timely manner.
 6. It has been reviewed and supported by BOTH the affiliated transporting EMS service AND the designated EMD center. This can be confirmed with a letter or

email indicating their review has been completed and agreed to by, and from, each organization.

7. It has been reviewed by the service medical director (if the service has one) AND the Regional Medical Director. This can be confirmed with a letter or email indicating their review has been completed and approved.
 8. What is the effective date of the plan and will this plan be permanent or possibly be rescinded at a future date?
- Maine EMS encourages services to work with their service-level medical director, Regional EMS office, Regional Medical Director, community leaders and other stakeholders to best ensure a robust EMS response plan.
 - The “how”, “when” and “methods of” PPE are operational and specific to each agency. Maine EMS does not review or approve these operational procedures.
 - Changes to response plans should consider the identified EMD Priority (e.g. Alpha-, Bravo-, Charlie-, Delta, or Echo-level) and not the specific medical or presumed medical condition of the patient.
 - As always, please incorporate best current practices by following the resource guidelines available through the Maine EMS COVID-19 resource page, the Maine CDC page and the Federal CDC. Links to all of these can be found on the Maine EMS website on the COVID-19 resource page.

The response plan request will be reviewed by Maine EMS following current rules and statutes. Maine EMS will approve, reject or seek clarification of the request in a timely fashion. Maine EMS licensed EMS services and EMD centers may not alter their responses until approved by Maine EMS. Please feel free to contact Maine EMS and/or your local EMS Regional Council with questions.