



Emergency Medical Services Agency

Bulletin 2023-03 - April 11, 2023

URGENT

PLEASE POST

COVID-19 Masking Requirement Update

As of April 3rd, 2023, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), has made changes to the existing COVID-19 guidance regarding masking.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel are no longer required to wear a facemask indoors and while inside of an ambulance or fire engine.

While masking is still recommended to help protect those at high risk for infection and complications, it is not required. Individual facilities are allowed to independently require masking if they choose. Please be aware of the masking requirements of the facilities that EMS personnel frequently interact with. **If a facility requires a facemask to be worn, EMS personnel shall comply with the requirement.**

DISPATCH & RESPONDING TO CALLS:

If your agency uses a Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS), the following guidance to **Difficulty Breathing** or **Sick/Unknown**, per Bulletin 2022-03, still applies ([2022-03.pdf \(ca.gov\)](#)). Dispatch will state **"meets criteria"** when a patient has had a positive COVID-19 test within the last 10 days (with or without symptoms), or if a patient complains of or has suspicion of a respiratory illness (including cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever, or flu-like symptoms). This prompt is a level of suspicion, not a diagnosis. Follow all Cal/OSHA requirements for PPE when a risk for aerosol transmissible diseases and pathogens exist.

COVID POSITIVE STAFF & CLOSE CONTACT GUIDELINES:

Refer to Bulletin 2023-02 dated March 9th, 2023 ([2023-02.pdf \(ca.gov\)](#)).

FLU SEASON MASKING REQUIREMENTS:

This bulletin does not alter the Local Health Officer Order dated September 14, 2022, which requires all healthcare workers (HCWs) to either receive the annual influenza vaccine OR sign a written declination and wear a surgical mask or higher-level respirator (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94) with good fit while on duty during flu season.

The Local Health Officer Order is set to expire April 30, 2023 ([9-14-2022-Mandatory-Flu-Vaccination-or-Mask-for-HC.pdf \(ca.gov\)](#)).

If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Oakley at roakley@co.slo.ca.us.