



ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to excellence in the Fire Service

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COVID-19 Guidance

The Illinois Fire Chiefs Association is providing the following guidance regarding COVID-19 to their members who do not work under a collective bargaining agreement. Members with a union agreement should refer to the similar guidance released jointly by the IFCA and the AFFI.

There are many resources and recommendations from the CDC and IDPH that fire departments and districts may utilize to remain up to date on COVID-19. Fire department/district leadership is strongly advised to take a proactive approach to implement policies and procedures to address the following key considerations. *Again, these are recommendations provided to you for guidance. Fire Departments/Districts must work with their local government and department/district management team to provide solutions for their community.*

Please refer to the attached COVID-19 decision tree to assist in situations where a response crew treated a suspected COVID-19 patient. It is vitally important that all responders take steps to protect themselves. Wearing proper PPE for suspected patients is a **MUST**. Consideration should be given to wearing this enhanced PPE for **all** responses during this highly contagious period. Guidance indicates significant protection is provided by wearing proper PPE, even when treating a COVID-19 positive patient. An exposure occurs when a responder does not have the proper PPE in place.

If fire service personnel are potentially exposed on duty to COVID-19 they should be quarantined either in their home or according to other pre-designed plans. It is strongly suggested that department/district leadership work on a plan to house quarantined members that are not comfortable going home. This may be considered on a local or regional basis.

If a responder tests positive for COVID-19, it is recommended that the Fire Chief immediately *consider* quarantine of other firefighters that were in close contact with the responder who tested positive. It is incredibly important to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The plan to quarantine emergency responders should be determined well in advance and widely distributed to the members of the fire department/district.

Again, the Fire Chiefs must consult with their local government attorney and/or workers compensation administrator, prior to being confronted with this situation. Planning for this event is critical and the most important step you can take right now.

These are *recommendations* that the IFCA feels should assist in beginning the important discussions of how our responders are taken care of in a time of an unprecedented illness. It is important that the leaders of the fire department work together to ***plan for this event*** and ***ensure the health of the firefighters and their families*** while continuing to ***provide essential services to the community***.

Any plan should include considerations of mobility needs and staffing should some departments experience high numbers of quarantined or isolated firefighters. Again, it is recommended that each fire department/district works with their neighbors to provide the best solution to continuing service.

Please remember that these are only recommendations. Please take the time to plan before your organization is placed in a situation that requires action.

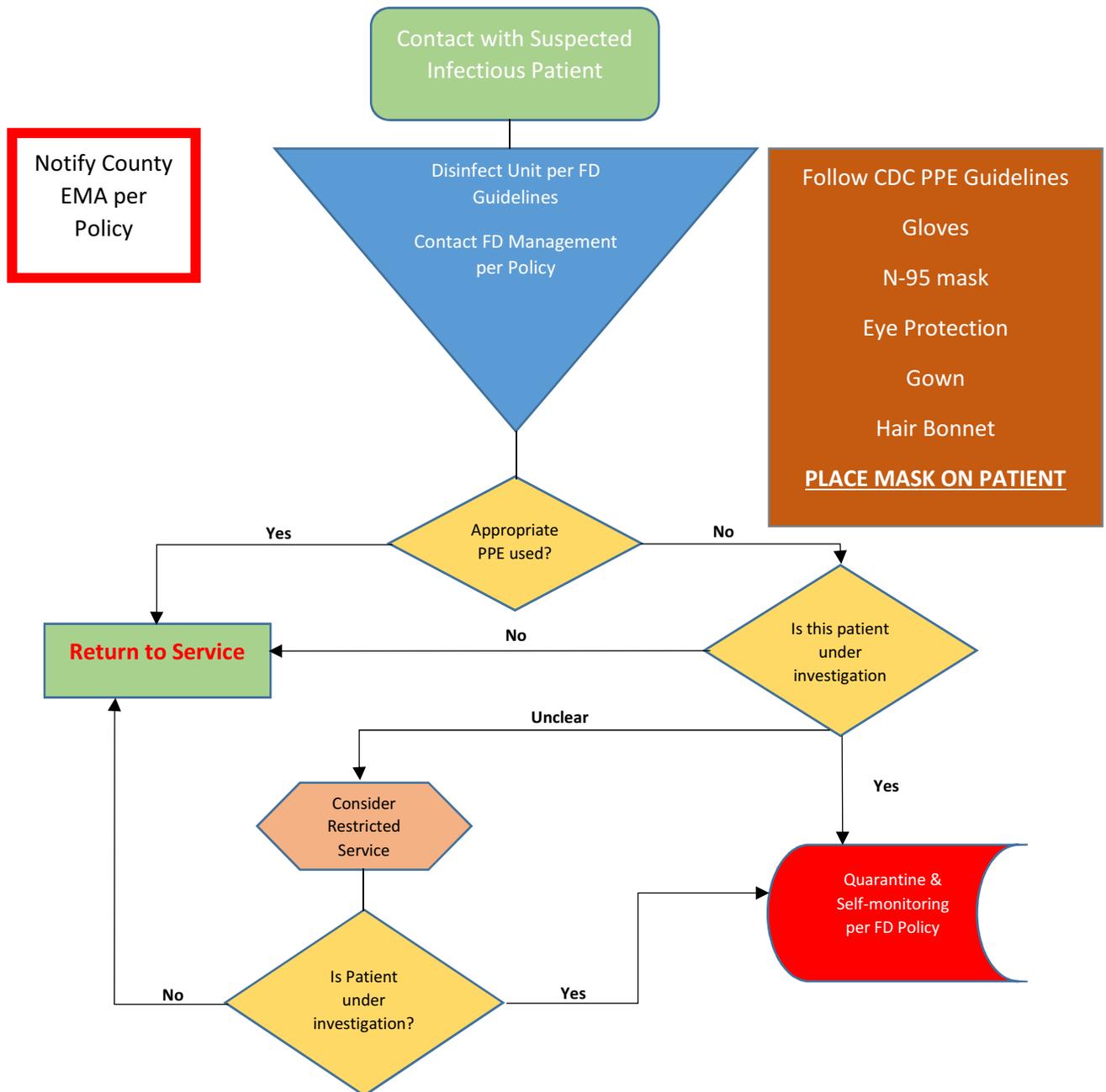
The following links for further updated guidance as this continues to evolve. Please continue to monitor the IFCA [website](#) to assist you with further questions or concerns.

IFCA Presidents

<i>Greg Earle</i>	<i>Don Shoevlin</i>	<i>John Kachanuk</i>	<i>Mark Puknaitis</i>
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Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Recommended COVID-19 Decision Tree For Fire Chiefs Effective March 16, 2020



All organizations should:

- Develop guidelines to define “Restricted Service” and “Quarantine” options
- Review staffing and response policies to minimize possible exposure and system stress
- Ensure responders have access to, proper training and requirements in place for PPE use
- Consider restricting activities including training that places groups of employees in one area or room
- Consult your Workers Comp carrier or human resources about practices regarding possible exposure
- Ensure that you have plans in place to re-stock PPE supplies and provide meals for responders

Note that this situation is changing rapidly and Chiefs should check www.illinoisfirechiefs.org