



PUBLIC HEALTH MEMO

COVID-19

COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Law Enforcement attending non-priority calls

The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly, and this guidance is subject to change. Please visit the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit website (www.wechu.org) regularly for updates and additional information. To subscribe for timely and relevant email updates please subscribe through the wechu.org website.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that spreads from person to person (close contact) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It is also spread through direct contact with a contaminated surface when a person touches the surface and then transfers the virus to their mouth, nose, and eyes when touching their face. Individuals with COVID-19 can have symptoms from mild to severe and most commonly include fever, cough or difficulty breathing. It is possible that people infected with COVID-19 may be infectious before showing significant symptoms. However, based on currently available data, the people who have symptoms are causing the majority of virus spread. Those at highest risk for COVID-19 include individuals who have recently travelled outside of Canada or those that have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. The Health Unit will manage contact tracing related to a confirmed case of COVID-19.

To protect yourself from exposure to COVID-19

- Actively screen people for recent travel and symptoms. If the person indicates they have any respiratory symptoms (with or without travel), please provide them with a surgical mask, ask them to return home and call telehealth (1-866-797-0000) or the public health unit (519-258-2146 ext. 1420).
- Maintain social distancing if possible (2 metres).
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds if available.
- Use alcohol based hand sanitizer (min. 70% alcohol) when soap and water is not readily available (e.g., in the police cruiser).
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, mouth and nose.
- Ensure you carry recommended PPE (mask, gown, gloves, goggles/face shield).
- If you believe you have come in contact with a suspect case of COVID-19, please contact your employer (HR, occupational health and safety etc.) for follow up and instruction.

Recommended Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- PPE is required for close contact with individuals who are screened positive for COVID-19.
- PPE is not required if social distancing is maintained (2 meters).

Recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting

If officers come in close contact with a person who screened positive for COVID-19 they should:



- Clean and disinfect all gear prior to reuse. Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19. Check the expiry date before using cleaners and disinfectants, and always follow the manufacturer’s directions for use to ensure their effectiveness.
- Follow organizational procedures for containment and disposal of used PPE.
- Wash uniform in laundry before reuse. Thoroughly wash hands after handling clothes and avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth or face.

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References:

1. Public Health Ontario. Technical Bulletin: Updated IPAC Recommendations for Use of Personal Protective Equipment for Care of Individuals with Suspect or Confirmed COVID-19 [internet]. [cited 2020 Mar 17]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/updated-ipac-measures-covid-19.pdf?la=en>