



## ***EMS Special Memorandum - #14-002***

Date: October 10, 2014

To: Mendocino/ Sonoma County EMS Providers and System Stakeholders

From: Bryan Cleaver  
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Re: **Infectious Disease Control Update**

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This guidance document is released in cooperation with the Public Health authorities of both Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. The intent is to provide guidance and information regarding the management of suspected Ebola cases within the Coastal Valleys EMS Area.

The California EMS Authority (EMSA) has recommended EMS provider agencies and systems follow the actions contained within the document linked below. CVEMSA and Public Health support the guidance as appropriate for the EMS System in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties:

<http://www.emsa.ca.gov/Media/Default/PDF/Ebola%20EMS%20Guidance.pdf>

Although the risk of a patient with Ebola presenting in Sonoma or Mendocino Counties remains very low, CVEMSA is developing instructions for EMS Communications Centers and Providers that are consistent with the guidance. Some of the main points are listed below:

Simply stated, any person complaining of a fever (>38.6 °C or 101.5 °F) OR symptoms such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain or unexplained hemorrhage; AND risk factors within the past 21 days before onset of symptoms, such as residence in or travel to an area where Ebola transmission is active\* should be considered a person under investigation (PUI) and Ebola precautions should be taken. EMS call takers may not have this information; responders must independently assess the risk factors upon arrival.

\*Currently at-risk countries include: Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria. Updated information is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/2014-west-africa/index.html>

Infection control for Ebola include standard, contact and droplet precautions. EMS personnel should wear gloves, goggles or face shield, N95 mask, and full-coverage impermeable gowns. Careful donning and doffing of PPE is equally important.

Early notification should be made to the receiving facility and the patient's intake into the ED should be done in coordination with ED staff in order to maintain infection control precautions. Strict confidentiality must be observed, and local Public Health Communicable Disease (CD) Authorities notified of a possible PUI as soon as possible.

Care for Ebola patients is supportive. Patients under Ebola infection control precautions should receive care consistent with CVEMSA protocols. Caregivers should exercise caution when

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performing procedures that increase the risk of contamination (such as ET intubation and administration of nebulized medications) and defer any unneeded routine invasive procedures until a controlled environment is available.

As detailed in the guidance, decontamination of reusable equipment and vehicles must be thorough; specific cleaning agents are advised within the document. Any non-cleanable items that become contaminated with body fluids must be disposed of as hazardous medical waste.

Responders should be aware that Ebola is not an airborne-transmitted disease; the virus is spread through the body fluids of infected persons coming into contact with another's eyes or mucus membranes. The infection can spread directly from body fluids or indirectly through contact with contaminated surfaces. For this reason, it is particularly important to carefully and thoroughly clean any areas with potential or confirmed fluid contamination.

If a rescuer does come into direct contact with body fluid of a PUI, work should be stopped and the individual should wash the affected skin surfaces with soap and water and report the exposure to an occupational health provider or supervisor for follow-up and Sonoma or Mendocino County Public Health CD Control.

Any suspected Ebola exposure case will be extensively reviewed by PH CD investigators to ensure all contact with the PUI is documented and potential for secondary infections addressed. Individuals who report a potential exposure will be monitored for signs of infection and will receive disease control instructions on safe activities while being monitored. Any person who becomes symptomatic will receive comprehensive medical care in cooperation with their personal and/or employer medical care provider and PH infectious disease experts.

Below are contact numbers for the respective counties' CD units:

During business hours:

Sonoma County Public Health Disease Control: (707) 565-4567

Mendocino County Disease Control: (707) 472-2713

After hours and weekends:

Sonoma County; Contact REDCOM at 707-565-8864 and ask for the Health Officer.

Mendocino County: (707) 272-8035

EMS provider agencies, both first response and transport, should carefully review the document and ensure the appropriate personal protective equipment is available to all personnel, and staff are provided reminder references for donning and doffing PPE. Links to posters are included in the EMSA guidance document. Provider agencies should also review the recommendations for decontamination of equipment and vehicles and make modifications to agency policies and practices as needed.

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Public Health and EMS Agency Staff will continue to monitor the situation closely. As resources and information become available, those will be shared with our providers and responders. Any agency with questions or concerns about PPE types and usage should contact EMS agency staff. We are developing handouts to support the recommendations made by the CDC and EMSA and will distribute those through our provider agency distribution lists.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the CD or EMS Agency Staff.



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