

FAQ: I'm a first aider. Should I change the way I respond to an emergency call?

Information current as at 07/07/2020. Next review to be carried out on or before 07/08/2020

The likelihood of you being called to a first aid incident in the University which involves a person who is infected with novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is low, due to its current circulation rate in the population, the reduced number of people on campus (compared to normal) and the government instruction for anyone with symptoms to self-isolate at home.

However, given that there is still a chance that either you or the casualty has contracted the COVID-19 virus, but is not yet showing any symptoms of the disease, this guidance has been updated in line with that from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE), Public Health England (PHE), the Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) and the University's First Aid training provider, and now includes the use of facemasks and eye protection.

NOTE: You should not treat COVID-19 complications as a first aid incident, and the patient should be referred to Campus Security and the NHS for treatment, in line with the University's guidance.

For added protection and to reassure casualties, your Safety Pouch will now include:-

- *Fluid-resistant surgical masks (FRSM) for you and the casualty to use (ONLY during a first aid incident)*
- *Safety glasses (of the type which fit over the majority of prescription spectacles)*
- *Disposable nitrile gloves*
- *Disposable polythene apron*
- *A bottle of alcohol-based hand sanitiser*
- *Disinfectant surface wipes*

Approaching the casualty

While maintaining a distance of 2m where possible, assess whether the casualty is conscious. IF NOT, immediately don your facemask, safety glasses, apron and gloves, and follow your training for provision of resuscitation techniques, taking into account the following modifications:-

Cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

The following guidance is based on that issued by RCUK, with addition of facemask use (in line with HSE guidance) and campus-specific details:-

- **Remember that if someone has had a cardiac arrest, they will almost certainly die if they are not treated. The use of a facemask and other protective equipment will reduce the risk of virus transmission so that you can be confident when treating them.**
- Recognise cardiac arrest by looking for the absence of signs of life and the absence of normal breathing. **Do not listen or feel for breathing by placing your ear and cheek close to the patient's mouth.** If you are in any doubt about confirming cardiac arrest, the default position is to start chest compressions until help arrives.
- Call Campus Security (024 765 22222, or 22222 on an internal phone) to request an ambulance, then put your phone on speaker so that you can treat the patient and still communicate with Security or ambulance control. **If COVID-19 is suspected, tell them when you call.**
- If you are concerned about the risk to yourself from COVID-19, apply a mask from your Safety Pouch to the patient's nose and mouth, ensuring that it doesn't restrict the airway. If you don't have a mask for them, a piece of clothing or a towel over the nose and mouth is a good substitute.
- **Early use of a defibrillator significantly increases the person's chances of survival and does NOT generate aerosols which would indicate the need for you to wear higher levels of PPE.**
- You should attempt **compression-only CPR and early defibrillation** until the ambulance (or advanced care team) arrives. Put hands together in the middle of the chest and push hard and fast – use the rhythm of the Bee Gees song "Staying Alive".
- **Do not administer rescue breaths.**
- If you have access to a bag valve mask ("Ambu Bag"), e.g. in an advanced first aid kit, you should use that to provide rescue breaths.

- After performing compression-only CPR, you (and anyone who has helped you) should remove all of your PPE, dispose of it carefully and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. The alcohol-based hand sanitiser in your kit is a convenient alternative.

All other first aid incidents

When first attending, stay a minimum of 2 metres away from the patient while establishing the circumstances of the injury.

Ask the patient to confirm if they have any of the early symptoms of COVID-19 infection:-

- High temperature
- New, persistent cough
- A loss of the sense of smell or taste

If they HAVE, and to reduce the risk to you, hand the patient a face mask from your Safety Pouch and tell them how to put it on. If a mask is not immediately available, their own face covering, or some paper tissues, hand towels, etc., held over their nose and mouth will also work.

NB: Advise the patient that they should immediately self-isolate at home for a minimum of 7 days, and report their symptoms using the NHS 111 ONLINE service. This will tell them how they can get tested. They should also report their infection to their line manager AND on the Campus COVID-19 hotline (024 765 23111).

If they are not feeling unwell in line with the above, try to establish whether the treatment is something that they could self-administer while you provide instructions from >2m away.

If this is not possible, and you need to have close contact, explain to the casualty that you are going to wear some PPE which will help to keep both of you safe, because some people may be carrying the virus without being unwell themselves.

Explain that you'd also like them to wear a mask for the same reason, and provide them with a mask from your Safety Pouch. If they have their own mask or face covering, this should be adequate.

Sanitise your hands, then don your facemask, followed by polythene apron, safety glasses and disposable gloves.

Treat the case in the normal way, confident that there is now little risk to you or the casualty.

When you have ended all contact with the casualty, ask them to remove their mask (if you have provided it for them) and hand it to you.

Place their mask in your waste bag, then remove your PPE in the following order:-

- Gloves
- Apron (ensure you only touch the inside surfaces of the polythene)
- SANITISE YOUR HANDS
- Eye Protection
- Surgical Mask

Bag any waste materials, including your gloves, apron, mask, paper tissues, etc., and place the sealed bag in the appropriate waste stream for collection, in line with how you have been trained.

Wash your hands thoroughly (for a minimum of 20 seconds) with soap and hot water. The alcohol-based hand gel in your kit is a convenient alternative if washing facilities are not immediately available. Advise the casualty to also wash their hands straightaway.

Wash your safety glasses under hot water and dry with a paper towel, or use a disinfectant wipe from your kit.

If you need to call for an ambulance, call Campus Security on 024 765 22222 (22222 from an internal phone), and inform them if you believe that the patient has a COVID-19 infection. DO NOT call 999.

Thank you for your continued service to the University community.

Useful links to additional information

[Guidance on first aid from the Health & Safety Executive](#)

[Statement on CPR from the Resuscitation Council UK](#)

[University Coronavirus webpages](#)

[Guidance on Covid-secure workplaces from Health & Safety Services](#)