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TO: EMS System Medical Directors  
EMS System Coordinators

FROM: Ashley Thoele, MSN, MBA, RN *ant*  
Division Chief, EMS and Highway Safety  
Deputy Chief Operating Officer

DATE: November 22, 2022

Re: IDPH Guidelines for Setting up an Ambulance Specifically for the Purpose of Transporting a Patient Who Meets the Risk Factors for a High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) which Includes the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) or Exposure to Patients with a High Consequence Infectious Disease.

An EMS Medical Director may request a waiver seeking approval from IDPH to utilize a currently licensed ambulance with most of the required vehicle equipment removed for the purpose of transporting a known or suspected HCID patient to a health care facility. The ambulance provider shall utilize the [Emergency Medical Services System Waiver Request](#) form and submit to the EMS System and department for approval. The vehicle identified for the waiver should only be used to transport patients that have been determined to need transport to a Special Pathogen Assessment Hospital or Treatment Center.

The vehicle must be accompanied (on scene and during transport) by another fully equipped provider or mutual aid non-transport vehicle or a transport ambulance licensed to operate at the same level of care as the transport isolation vehicle. The accompanying vehicle will provide the needed equipment or personnel to the transport isolation vehicle, if required.

Appropriate PPE should be available to the crew members of the accompanying vehicle should the need arise to assist other crew members of the transport isolation vehicle.

All EMS crew members or Health Care Workers (HCW) providing care to known or suspected HCID patients are recommended to follow the CDC's recommended guidance for PPE and transportation guidelines. For instructions, go to the following websites:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/clinicians/emergency-services/ems-systems.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/healthcare-us/ppe/guidance.html>

Medical Protocols may need to be modified by the EMS Medical Director to align with the CDC guidance for care of a patient with suspected HCID during transport. These modified protocols should be submitted to IDPH for approval.

At minimum, the transport isolation vehicle should have the following established:

- The patient compartment should be separated for splash or droplet protection from the driver's cab area. Covering walls, ceiling, floors, seats and benches with one water impermeable barrier such as transparent heavy plastic sheeting may be an option to help reduce contamination by body fluids and provide easier decontamination upon completion of the transport. (This would increase the medical waste that would be handled as a category A infectious substance.)
- The transport isolation vehicle shall have the capability to communicate with the accompanying vehicle.
- Airway maintenance supplies and oxygen delivery system supplies and equipment must be present. (Provider may utilize a first-response bag in a separate sealed bag or plastic container.)
- Suction equipment and suction supplies shall be present and working.
- Emesis bags and bedpans shall be available
- Towels, linens, blankets and pillows shall be present (consider disposable items for these requirements).
- Appropriate PPE shall be available for personnel staffing the transport isolation vehicle
- Proper disinfectants for decontamination of the vehicle's surfaces.
- Biohazard waste bags.
- Biohazard container for storage of biohazard waste during transport.
- Consideration of full Tyvek coveralls and a hooded powered air purifying respirator (PAPR) one for each EMS crew member or accompanying HCW's would provide increased splash protection, reduce fogging of goggles or face shields and improve crew comfort during the transport.

Note: use of standard stethoscopes with PAPRs generally is not feasible due to the ambient noise created by the PAPRs. Standard Stethoscopes also pose potential HCW contamination risk.

EMS Systems should work with receiving hospitals to determine plans for routes and hospital access of accepting the known or suspected HCID patient to minimize exposure to other patients and/or unnecessary contamination of the health care facility. Exercising a plan is highly recommended.

Ambulance crew members should review and practice donning and doffing, decontamination procedures, prevent environmental exposures, and safely manage medical waste following the recommended guidelines by the CDC.

Questions or concerns should be addressed to your IDPH Regional EMS Coordinator.