



## Emergency services during the COVID-19 pandemic

During COVID-19 pandemic event, the number of 911 calls to dispatch centers and requests for EMS services will increase and will often stress our available resources. The Dayton Fire Department and jurisdictions around the region are prepared and are currently responding to this pandemic.

However, during this public health emergency, we are asking citizens to contact their primary care physicians, urgent care centers, or telemedicine for routine and other non-life threatening conditions, rather than calling 911 to request emergency services or going to emergency rooms.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms such as a cough or mild difficulty breathing, **call your healthcare provider for medical advice**. Most people who get COVID-19 will have mild symptoms and will recover just fine at home.

It is important to stay home to limit community spread and reduce the possibility of infecting first responders, healthcare providers, and those who are at higher risk of having complications such as older adults and persons with compromised immune systems.

If you develop emergency symptoms for COVID-19, call 911. These symptoms include severe difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face.

When calling 911, please inform the dispatcher if you are experiencing flu-like or respiratory symptoms. If possible, the patient should try to meet the crew at the front door to reduce exposures. Our crews will ask patients to put on a surgical mask to prevent transmission of the disease and protect those around them.

To ensure effective patient care and minimize cross-contamination of EMS units and hospitals, EMS units will only allow family members or support persons to be transported with the patient when it is essential to patient care. All other requests for companion transports will be denied at this time.

- Examples of companions who must be transported in EMS units include parents or guardians of minors; persons who can provide critical information about the patient for diagnoses such as stroke; or translators when significant language barriers exist.
- Companions who are demonstrating infectious symptoms such as fever, cough or illness will not be transported (unless being treated as an additional patient in the patient compartment).

When EMS resources are utilized appropriately, especially during potentially high call volumes, we can better ensure EMS units are available to respond to critical life-threatening emergencies such as cardiac arrest, strokes, traumatic injuries, and other critical time-dependent emergencies.

The men and women of this region's Fire and EMS services are honored to serve each and every day and will continue to respond with courage and professionalism throughout this pandemic.

By taking these steps to reduce non-emergency calls, you can help ensure our response when needed most.



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