



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Office of Emergency Medical Services



Frequently Asked Questions/Concerns regarding COVID-19

Concerns that provider COVID fatigue is growing:

COVID-19 fatigue is real for everyone. The need to stay safe and vigilant remains high. Please take advantage of resources to improve provider resilience. We are in this together and we need to take care of each other.

OEMS initiatives in response to EMS provider's resiliency:

- OEMS is working on materials and resources to support EMS provider's resiliency
- CEMSAB has initiated a Health and Wellness sub-committee to evaluate lessons learned and ways in which to provide continued support of EMS Providers.

Do we have a recently updated return to work guidance from CDC for health care providers?

The DPH Epidemiology staff released an updated document, "Return-to-Work Guidance for Healthcare Workers and First Responders during the COVID-19 Pandemic", which was distributed by Everbridge on November 24, 2020 and can be found on the [OEMS website](#).

We are beginning to see personnel out sick and/or quarantined. Can EMS conduct internal COVID19 testing?

The Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS) does not regulate this process. A tool kit was developed to assist First Responder/EMS agencies to stand up a COVID-19 testing site for their own workforce and other essential workers as designated by the municipality. The toolkit was sent to all EMS Chiefs via Everbridge and can be found on the [OEMS website](#).

Are EMS providers being considered as vaccinators for the expected COVID19 mass vaccination initiatives?

Yes. the Department is currently working on the vaccination plan and what steps may need to be taken to expand vaccinators.

When can we expect federal resources?

Connecticut specific updates are available at <https://www.ct.gov/coronavirus> and updates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. As the information is continuously evolving, please check these websites frequently for updates.

There are concerns over continuity of operations. Should a service lose a significant number of providers and neighboring towns, (mutual aid) are experiencing the same issue, what resources are available?

Mutual aid agreements should be in place in order to anticipate situations where a significant number of responders enter quarantine and are unable to respond. Maintaining frequent and open communications with all neighboring and mutual aid agencies may provide them with some advance notice and allow for adjustments to schedules and staffing plans. Communicating with your local PSAP, may also be helpful in alerting them to a reduced capacity to respond.

If local capacity is impacted to the point where existing mutual aid agreements are insufficient to correct for coverage issues, consider connecting initially with local resources such as municipal leadership, EMD's, and then consider regional resources such as County Coordinator, or other services, which may lay outside your existing Mutual Aid Agreements.

There is concern over retention and financial impact of EMS personnel during the pandemic due to providers not being allowed to work for more than one employer.

Volunteer services might consider developing more robust policies that define personal and medical leave. These status changes might provide some flexibility for members who are precluded from service due to employment constraints or personal and family health concerns.

How does a provider maintain their training and expertise during the pandemic?

Continuing education continues both in-person, virtually and through distributive education. Over 500 CME offerings are listed on the [OEMS website](#). Virtual simulation is being developed by many commercial vendors.

CEU training with/without hands-on skills. Update on expiration date extension(s).

Expirations are not being enforced for a period of six months after the public health emergency is declared under control by the Governor. For example, if the emergency is declared over on February 1, this office will return to expirations on August 1.

What is the status of vehicle inspections?

Vehicle inspections are being performed virtually through Zoom meetings. Services that are due for their biennial inspection are being contacted by the OEMS inspector to schedule their inspection. Those services who need an inspection in order to put a new vehicle into service are contacting the inspector to schedule one. In-person inspections will be performed on an emergent basis.

Reminder of continued use of PPE

Services are encouraged to continue sourcing PPE through their vendors. Attached in a separate document (DAS sourcing leads.xls) is a DAS listing of additional vendors. A PowerPoint slide deck on PPE Usage is listed on the [OEMS website](#).

Update on Certificate of Operations

Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7O which authorized Department of Public Health Commissioner to suspend license renewal and inspection requirements during the COVID-19 civil preparedness emergency remains in effect. Services are put in renewal 90 days prior to their expiration date. If your Service is in renewal and you did not receive your notice, please email reneeholota@ct.gov.

We understand and appreciate that everyone is working very hard to advocate for and to keep their workforce safe. Please be assured that we at DPH share in your commitment, recognize the critical work you are doing and will continue to do what we can to keep everyone informed and safe.