

South Carolina Department of Public Safety



Viral Pathogen Traffic Enforcement Official Guidance

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Introduction

It is the South Carolina Department of Public Safety's (SCDPS or department) indispensable duty as a law enforcement agency to provide a safe environment for South Carolina citizens and the motoring public traveling upon South Carolina roadways. The information established in this document provides law enforcement officers reasonable instruction for carrying out their daily duties. This guide is not expected to and cannot address every possible scenario but will provide general guidance and protective measures to maintain an appropriate enforcement posture in response to viral pathogen diseases.

While the potential exists for law enforcement personnel to experience medium and high risk incidents (as it pertains to viral infections and defined herein), the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) categorize the risk potential for law enforcement officers performing regular duties as low risk. SCDPS continues to take the necessary precautions to preserve the health and wellness of its law enforcement officers whose job duties involve contact with the general public and preserve the health and wellness of those with whom the officers come into contact.

General Overview of COVID-19

Individuals infected with COVID-19 have reported experiencing mild to severe respiratory symptoms.

- Symptoms may appear in as few as two (2) days or as long as fourteen (14) days after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets among close contacts. Respiratory droplets are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes and can land in the mouths or noses, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs, of people who are nearby. Close contact may include:
 - Being within approximately six (6) feet of an individual infected with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (greater than 10 minutes).
 - Having direct contact with body fluids (such as blood, phlegm, and respiratory droplets) from an individual with COVID-19.

Exposure Risk Potential

No Identifiable Risk – This category refers to troopers/officers continuing to be asymptomatic (no symptoms) with no identifiable contact or very minimal exposure to a carrier of COVID-19.

Low Risk – This category refers to brief interaction with subjects who are carriers of COVID-19 where social distancing (at least 6 feet of separation) occurred and troopers/officers have not made physical contact with items possessed by the carrier.

Medium Risk – This category refers to troopers/officers who have had prolonged (longer than 10 minutes) proximate contact with a person who has been infected with COVID-19 and/or situations in which troopers/officers were exposed to material or spaces potentially infected with COVID-19 (e.g., interactions with symptomatic individuals who are within social distance [at least 6 feet of separation] of the trooper/officer and the infected individual has sneezed or coughed).

High Risk – This category refers to troopers/officers in close proximity (e.g., arrest situations) to an individual who is symptomatic or who is confirmed to be infected with COVID-19.

Self-Monitoring

In order to minimize the risk to the public, employees, and their families, the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) asks that all employees actively self-monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19 which may include:

1. New unexplained dry cough (not to include known seasonal allergies)
2. Sustained fever greater than 100.4°
3. Gastrointestinal issues such as upset stomach or diarrhea
4. Sore throat
5. Difficulty breathing/shortness of breath (in serious cases - seek immediate medical attention)
6. Unexplained fatigue

(Or a combination of two of the following symptoms):

1. Chills
2. Repeated shaking with chills
3. Muscle pain
4. Headache
5. Sore throat
6. New loss of smell or taste

Enforcement Priorities

SCDPS law enforcement officers shall consider divisional enforcement priorities and conduct appropriate proactive enforcement activities to protect the general welfare of the public.

Protective Measures

Traffic Enforcement

While engaged in traffic enforcement, troopers/officers shall:

- Consider the option to wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to include facemasks and gloves during all interactions with the public, regardless of exposure risk as it is classified within this document. Troopers/Officers shall wear a mask if requested by the violator.
- Maintain a tactical advantage when approaching a stopped vehicle while creating an acceptable social distance to conduct the business at hand.
- Maintain a distance of at least six (6) feet from others, if possible.
- Consider avoiding touching documents an individual/citizen would normally provide to a law enforcement officer such as a driver's license, registration, insurance information, etc. Officers/troopers shall request the individual to display and/or read aloud all information necessary for documentation purposes (officers should utilize the Telecommunications Centers, the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), or SCDMV online to obtain information necessary to complete forms).
- Attempt to stay upwind during encounters with suspects or civilians.

- Consider the nature of the violation and alternatives to custodial arrest. If the contact can be handled with a courtesy summons or warrant at a later time, troopers/officers shall gather all pertinent information to perform this task when conditions permit.
 - In situations where custodial arrest is warranted and circumstances allow, officers/troopers shall utilize appropriate PPE such as gloves, masks and eye protection to affect the arrest.
 - In situations where a custodial arrest has been performed and the detention center or hospital will not grant admittance, guidance shall be sought, through the appropriate chain of command, from the local solicitor's office for available alternatives.
 - If it is determined the person taken into custody is in need of medical care for COVID-19, the trooper/officer shall contact his/her immediate supervisor and coordinate transport with the appropriate emergency medical service.
 - During the intake process at a detention facility, the trooper/officer shall continue to socially distance himself/herself and the violator from other individuals in the facility.

Traffic Incident Management

When engaged in collision investigation, troopers/officers shall:

- Anticipate the possibility of contaminated surfaces, blood, and other bodily fluids within vehicles and utilize PPE such as gloves, masks and eye protection to:
 - Retrieve items from a vehicle,
 - Manage evidence, or
 - Conduct proper searches/inventories to include searches of deceased victims.
- Attempt to stay upwind during encounters with suspects or civilians.

Backup Officer/Primary Officer Responsibilities

Troopers/Officers reporting to an incident in a backup capacity shall be mindful of secondary contamination and avoid direct contact with subjects/suspects involved in the incident. The backup officer shall perform duties related to traffic incident management, officer safety, and/or scene mitigation. Should immediate intervention be necessary, the backup officer shall provide affirmative assistance to the primary officer in affecting an arrest, subduing a combative subject, etc., but shall otherwise maintain an appropriate distance to avoid exposure. Due to the potential exposure established by the primary officer's contact, he/she shall be responsible for completing person and/or vehicle searches incident to arrest and vehicle inventories.

Continuous Countermeasures

Troopers/Officer shall continuously practice the following countermeasures:

- Practice proper hand hygiene.
 - Use disposable gloves when making contacts with citizens, as necessary.
 - Wash hands with soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol may be used.

- Troopers/Officers shall NOT touch their faces with unwashed hands.
- Avoid shaking hands and any otherwise unnecessary physical contact with the public.
- Utilize issued PPE to the best of their abilities in situations that require close contact. If a trooper/officer anticipates a medium-risk or high-risk exposure situation, he/she shall utilize the appropriate PPE.
- Offer trained Emergency Medical Service/Emergency Medical Technician (EMS/EMT) assistance upon encountering an individual suspected to be infected with COVID-19.
- Ensure their vehicles are fueled prior to end of their shifts to maintain a state of operational readiness.
- Ensure their vehicles and contents are cleaned/sanitized as frequently as necessary. Any bodily fluid spills that occur in a departmental vehicle shall be thoroughly cleaned, using gloves, with soapy water and then wiped or sprayed with a disinfectant solution of 1-part bleach to 10-parts water solution.
- Ensure equipment is disinfected after contact with individuals confirmed or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 (e.g., cleaning/wiping the duty belt and its attached items, disinfecting hard surfaces within the patrol vehicle by utilizing disinfectant spray, hand wipes, or warm soapy water).
- Properly remove and dispose of used PPE equipment in accordance with procedures for biohazard waste containment (properly labeled leak proof plastic bags for gloves, wipes and masks).

Law Enforcement Canine Exposure

If a police canine has been exposed to a person or setting with COVID-19 and develops a new illness, the canine officer shall notify his/her chain of command, isolate the canine from other animals, and contact the appropriate veterinary clinic.

Contaminated Uniforms

Law enforcement uniforms and/or parts of the uniform which become contaminated or are potentially contaminated shall be treated as such. Officers shall wear gloves when removing any or all uniform parts so as to avoid contamination of other areas of the body and/or uniform. Do not shake the clothing out. Contaminated laundry shall be handled as infrequently as possible and only by employees who are wearing the appropriate PPE. The contaminated clothing shall be disposed of in appropriately-labeled, leak proof bags or biohazard containers. The bags of clothing shall be treated as evidentiary items and submitted to the appropriate evidence storage area for proper disposal. Requests for replacement uniforms or uniform parts shall be submitted, through the appropriate chain of command, to Patrol Supply.

Potential Exposures to COVID-19

If an officer suspects he/she has been exposed, he/she shall:

- Immediately notify his/her supervisor;
- Seek medical attention (if necessary); and
- Complete an Internal Report of Injury form to document the incident properly.

Work-Related Exposure

Low-risk exposures do not require self-quarantine but the exposed employee should use the Symptom Monitoring Tracker to record his/her temperature and presence of any symptoms twice daily for fourteen (14) days.

If an employee experiences a medium-risk or high-risk exposure incident during the course of his/her duties, he/she shall contact his/her supervisor immediately or when it is safe to do so. If the exposed employee remains asymptomatic, he/she shall continue to report for duty as regularly scheduled. However, he/she must wear a facemask at all times for fourteen (14) days after his/her exposure and practice social distancing as often as practicably possible. The exposed, but asymptomatic, employee shall monitor his/her temperature prior to reporting for duty and report any fever to his/her supervisor. If an employee reports a fever, the supervisor shall advise the employee not to report for work. If an employee becomes sick at any point during the day, he/she shall be sent home immediately. The employee's supervisor shall compile a list of all individuals who had contact with the employee when his/her symptoms began and anyone who had contact with the employee two (2) days before the symptoms began. Anyone who was within six (6) feet of the employee should be considered exposed.

The employee or his/her supervisor shall complete the Internal Report of Injury Incident Report along with the Worker's Compensation Option Form (both forms are located on the DPS Forms Page). The employee's supervisor shall then notify the Compendium Group of the exposure.

If self-quarantine is necessary, the employee shall proceed in accordance with the options provided in the Worker's Compensation Option Form. Employees in self-quarantine statuses shall regularly provide updates to their supervisors regarding their condition. Any employees in self-quarantine status should use the Symptom Monitoring Tracker to record their temperature and the presence of any symptoms twice daily for fourteen (14) days. Self-quarantine and/or monitoring shall continue for as long as recommended by a medical professional.

Any employee who tests positive for COVID-19 shall self-quarantine and not report for duty for at least fourteen (14) days. If symptoms persist beyond fourteen (14) days, the employee may not report for duty until twenty-four (24) hours after symptoms have ceased. An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate and be excluded from work for at least seven (7) days after he/she first develops symptoms. The employee may return to work once he/she meets the following three (3) criteria:

1. At least seven (7) days have passed since symptoms began.
2. At least three (3) days have passed since the person last had fever (and must not have been taking fever-masking medications during that time, such as Tylenol or Advil).
3. If the person has had cough and/or shortness of breath, he/she must be improving (but do not have to have resolved fully).

Non-Work Related Exposure

If an employee experiences a medium-risk or high-risk exposure incident unrelated to the performance of his/her job duties (non-work related), the employee is not required to complete any written departmental documents. In these situations, employees are strongly encouraged to adhere to personal accountability, to include notifying their direct supervisor and voluntarily self-quarantining. If the exposed employee remains asymptomatic, he/she shall continue to report for duty as regularly scheduled. However, he/she must wear a facemask at all times for fourteen (14) days after his/her exposure and practice social distancing as often as practicably possible. The exposed, but asymptomatic employee, shall monitor

his/her temperature prior to reporting for duty and report any fever to his/her supervisor. If an employee reports a fever, the supervisor shall advise the employee not to report for work. If an employee becomes sick at any point during the day, he/she shall be sent home immediately. The employee's supervisor shall compile a list of all individuals who had contact with the employee when his/her symptoms began. Anyone who was within six (6) feet of the employee should be considered exposed.

Employees in self-quarantine statuses shall regularly provide updates to their supervisors regarding their condition. Any employees in self-quarantine status should use the Symptom Monitoring Tracker to record their temperature and the presence of any symptoms twice daily for fourteen (14) days. Self-quarantine and/or monitoring shall continue for as long as recommended by a medical professional.

Any employee who tests positive for COVID-19 shall self-quarantine and not report for duty for at least fourteen (14) days. If symptoms persist beyond fourteen (14) days, the employee may not report for duty until twenty-four (24) hours after symptoms have ceased. An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate and be excluded from work for at least seven (7) days after he/she first develops symptoms. The employee may return to work once he/she meets the following three (3) criteria:

1. At least seven (7) days have passed since symptoms began.
2. At least three (3) days have passed since the person last had fever (and must not have been taking fever-masking medications during that time, such as Tylenol or Advil).
3. If the person has had cough and/or shortness of breath, he/she must be improving (but do not have to have resolved fully).

To limit the spread of COVID-19, please adhere to the CDC quarantine guidelines and seek medical treatment. Quarantine can be voluntary but in a public health emergency, officials have the authority to quarantine people who have been exposed to an infectious disease.

Symptom Monitoring Tracker

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