



Paramedic Chiefs
of Canada

Chefs Paramédics
du Canada

Paramedic Services Week

May 24-30, 2020

Pandemic: Paramedics on the Front Line

Protect the Protectors Help the Helpers

Paramedics face the unknown every day, entering a stranger's home, sometimes with very little detail regarding the emergency or dangers ahead. Now, facing COVID-19 that risk has increased substantially, not knowing what they may or may not be exposed to can be a concern for those on the front line of a pandemic.

COVID-19 has dramatically affected the way Paramedics keep themselves and the public safe and healthy. Every call a paramedic goes to has the possibility of being a COVID-19 patient. While several paramedics in Canada have tested positive for the virus, it's difficult to say if they contracted it on the job, but it is likely within the environment they work in. Others have had to take time off work and self-isolate due to close contact with patients who tested positive for the virus.

The problem is not every patient is forthcoming with information early in the assessment, and sometimes by the time they are it can be too late. Across the country paramedics have struggled with patients who change their story about travel history and symptoms after calling 911. This puts everyone at risk. Paramedics will respond even if you're at risk for COVID-19 so please be honest so they can take the proper safety measures. A sick paramedic CANNOT help you.

So What Can **YOU** Do?

- Be honest with the 911 call specialist and Paramedics about travel history, close contact and symptoms.
- Give Paramedics 6 feet distance when they arrive so that they may perform their screening assessment.
- If Paramedics request you wear a surgical mask or gown, do so if you are able.
- Only call 911 if it is emergency, this is not a phone line to ask how/where to get tested and calling 911 will not help you get tested quicker.
- Leave the personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers.
- If you are sick; self-isolate, practice proper hand washing and monitor your symptoms.
- BE PATIENT, paramedics are learning a lot right now on how to protect themselves and you during these unprecedented times.

WE GO to work FOR YOU, please stay home FOR US?



Increase in call volume in areas hit hard by COVID-19 are putting an added strain on those paramedic services. Calls are also taking longer because paramedics need to be careful not to expose themselves to the virus and risk spreading it across the community. It means wearing numerous kinds of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) several times per shift which is a necessary but time-consuming effort. Listening to and complying with your local government's regulations for social distancing and protective measures is the best way to protect your frontline workers, as they put their health and safety on the line for you during the pandemic.