



# County of San Diego

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## EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR URGES CONTINUED PROTECTIVE MEASURES DURING COVID SURGE

San Diego County epidemiologic surveillance indicates we are entering a late summer COVID surge. Infections can lead to staffing shortages in both the prehospital and hospital settings, negatively contributing to an already busy healthcare system. Furthermore, infected EMS professionals can unknowingly transmit virus to vulnerable patients.

As with [previous surges](#), EMS professionals are strongly encouraged to be up-to-date on influenza and COVID vaccinations. Additionally, please adhere to non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) by remembering the **3Ws**:

- **W**ash your hands (for at least 2 minutes)
- In crowded or poorly ventilated settings:
  - **W**ear your mask/respirator (N95 or equivalent)
  - **W**alk away (maintain at least 6 feet from others when feasible)

Consider reimplementing [best practices](#) in fire stations or other indoor workplaces, including:

Wear well-fitted N95/equivalent when in close proximity to others (including in ambulances)	Hold meetings, including morning briefings, outside or via virtual platforms
Maximize indoor ventilation	Spread out chairs and recliners in the station
Consume meals/convene meetings outdoors	Decrease contact between crews at shift change
Crack window while driving to improve ventilation	

Please mask patients for source control, as appropriate. As a reminder, stay home if you are sick – even when symptoms are mild. Thank you for your continued actions to help curb the spread of COVID and preserve our emergency healthcare system.

Respectfully,

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director  
San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office  
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cc: Eric McDonald, MD, MPH, FACEP, Interim Agency Director and Chief Medical Officer  
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