



County of San Diego

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December 12, 2022

EMS MEDICAL DIRECTOR URGES CONTINUED PROTECTIVE MEASURES DURING THE CURRENT RESPIRATORY VIRUS SURGE

With the current triple-demic surge of COVID-Influenza-RSV, it is critically important to maintain non-pharmaceutical preventions (NPIs) to mitigate spread of infection. The County of San Diego is experiencing high community transmission of both COVID and influenza. In addition to rises in case counts, we are seeing increased hospitalizations further exacerbating healthcare system stresses. It is essential that we take **immediate action** to curb the spread of these viruses ahead of the upcoming holiday season.

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

- **W**ash your hands (for at least 2 minutes)
- **W**ear your mask (N95 or equivalent)
- **W**alk away (maintain at least 6 feet from others)

Remember to implement [best practices](#) in fire stations or other indoor workplaces. These include:

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

As a reminder, stay home if you are sick – even if the symptoms are mild. In addition, please remember to [mask patients](#) for source control. [Masking continues to be required inside all healthcare facilities](#) in California.

December 12, 2022

Page 2 of 2

We continue to encourage EMS providers to exercise extra diligence to their health and safety, both on- and off-duty. Case numbers are rapidly accelerating. Your actions can help mitigate this real and ongoing threat. Your patients, families, and the entire community are depending on you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristi Koenig". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kristi L. Koenig, MD, FACEP, FIFEM, FAEMS, Medical Director
San Diego County Emergency Medical Services Office
San Diego County Fire

cc: Eric McDonald, MD, MPH, Chief Medical Officer
Wilma Wooten, MD, MPH, Public Health Officer
Jeff Collins, Director
Andy Parr, EMS Administrator