



# FLORIDA FUSION CENTER

## Interim CDC Guidance for First Responders for Suspected Ebola Virus Disease in the United States

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Brief

Situational Awareness

### Purpose

*There are currently no reported or suspected cases of Ebola in Florida. This document is to serve as an introduction and overview of Ebola and appropriate precautionary measures for first responders. As additional information becomes available it will be updated and disseminated as appropriate.*

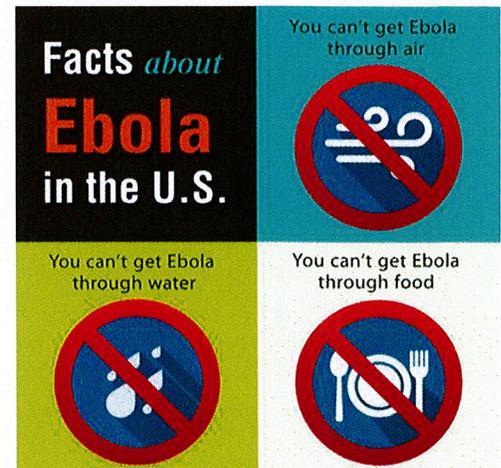
### Background

The current Ebola outbreak in West Africa has increased the possibility of patients with Ebola traveling from the affected countries to the United States. The likelihood of contracting Ebola is extremely low unless a person has direct unprotected contact with the body fluids of a person (like urine, saliva, feces, vomit, sweat, and semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola or direct handling of bats or nonhuman primates from areas with Ebola outbreaks.

The initial signs and symptoms of Ebola are similar to many other more common diseases found in West Africa (such as malaria and typhoid). Ebola should be considered in anyone with fever who has traveled to, or lived in, an area where Ebola is present or has had contact with an infected person. The incubation period for Ebola, from exposure to when signs or symptoms appear, ranges from 2 to 21 days (most commonly 8-10 days). Any Ebola patient with signs or symptoms should be considered infectious. Until suspected Ebola patients develop symptoms, they are not contagious. The prevention of Ebola includes actions to avoid exposure to blood or body fluids of infected patients through contact with skin, mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth, or injuries with contaminated needles or other sharp objects.

Emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, along with other emergency services staff, have a vital role in responding to requests for help, triaging patients, and providing emergency treatment to patients. Unlike patient care in the controlled environment of a hospital or other fixed medical facility, EMS patient care before getting to a hospital is provided in an uncontrolled environment. This setting is often confined to a very small space and frequently requires rapid medical decision-making and interventions with limited information. EMS personnel are frequently unable to determine the patient history before having to administer emergency care.

Coordination among 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), the EMS system, healthcare facilities, and the public health system is important when responding to patients with suspected Ebola. Each 9-1-1 and EMS system should include an EMS medical director to provide appropriate medical supervision.



## Symptoms

Initial signs and symptoms of Ebola include sudden fever, chills, and muscle aches, with diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain occurring approximately five days after exposure. Other symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, headache, or confusion, may also develop. Symptoms may become increasingly severe and may include jaundice (yellow skin), severe weight loss, confusion, bleeding inside and outside the body, shock, and multi-organ failure.

## Recommendations for First Responders

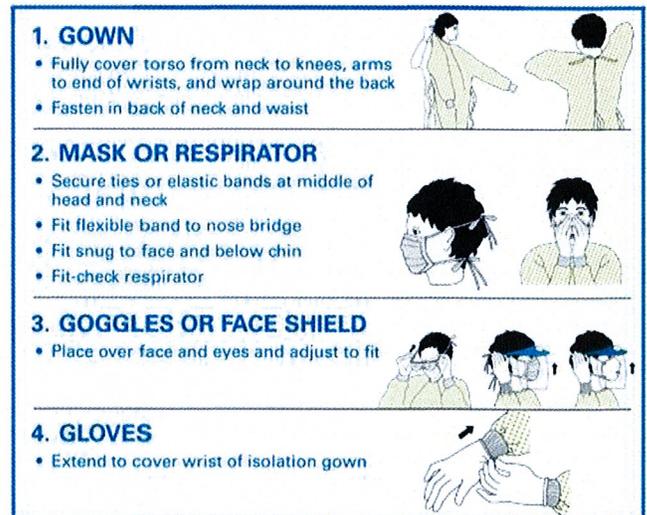
For the purposes of this section, "First Responders" means pre-hospital EMS, law enforcement and fire service First Responders. First Responder practices should be based on the most up-to-date Ebola clinical recommendations and information from appropriate public health authorities and EMS medical direction.

When state and local EMS authorities consider the threat to be elevated (based on information provided by local, state, and federal public health authorities, including the city or county health department(s), state health department(s), and the CDC), they may direct First Responders to modify their practices as described below.

## Infection Control

First Responders can safely manage a patient with suspected or confirmed Ebola by following recommended isolation and infection control procedures, including standard, contact, and droplet precautions. Particular attention should be paid to protecting mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth from splashes of infectious material, or self-contamination from soiled gloves. Early recognition and identification of patients with potential Ebola is critical. A First Responder agency managing a suspected Ebola patient should follow these CDC recommendations:

- Limit activities, especially during transport, that can increase the risk of exposure to infectious material (e.g., airway management, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, use of needles).
- Limit the use of needles and other sharps as much as possible. All needles and sharps should be handled with extreme care and disposed in puncture-proof, sealed containers.
- Phlebotomy, procedures, and laboratory testing should be limited to the minimum necessary for essential diagnostic evaluation and medical care.



## Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Use of standard, contact, and droplet precautions is sufficient for most situations when treating a patient with a suspected case of Ebola as defined above. First responder personnel should wear:

- Double Gloves
- Impermeable Gown (fluid resistant or impermeable) (no exposable skin)
- Eye protection (goggles or face shield that fully covers the front and sides of the face)
- Facemask
- Additional PPE might be required in certain situations (e.g., large amounts of blood and body fluids present in the environment), including but not limited to double gloving, disposable shoe covers, and leg coverings.

## Decontamination

If blood, body fluids, secretions, or excretions from a patient with suspected Ebola come into direct contact with the First Responder's skin or mucous membranes, then the First Responder should stop working as soon as it is safe. As soon as possible, they should wash the affected skin surfaces with soap and water and report exposure to an occupational health provider or supervisor for follow-up. Contaminated clothing and equipment should be handled the same as contaminated PPE.

## Recommended PPE should be used by First Responders as follows:

- PPE should be worn upon entry into the scene and continued to be worn until personnel are no longer in contact with the patient.
- PPE should be carefully removed without contaminating one's eyes, mucous membranes, or clothing with potentially infectious materials.
- PPE should be placed into a medical waste container at the hospital or double bagged and held in a secure location.
- Re-useable PPE should be cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's reprocessing instructions and First Responder agency policies.
- Instructions for putting on and removing PPE have been published online at <http://www.cdc.gov/HAI/prevent/ppe.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ppe-poster.pdf> [PDF - 2 pages] (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/ppe-poster.pdf>).
- Hand hygiene should be performed immediately after removal of PPE.

## Environmental Infection Control –

For additional information, see CDC's [Interim Guidance for Environmental Infection Control in Hospitals for Ebola Virus](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/environmental-infection-control-in-hospitals.html) (<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/environmental-infection-control-in-hospitals.html>).

## Cleaning First Responder Transport Vehicles after Transporting a Patient with Suspected or Confirmed Ebola –

The Ebola virus is a Category A infectious substance regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Hazardous Materials Regulations (HMR, 49 C.F.R., Parts 171-180). Any item transported for disposal that is contaminated or suspected of being contaminated with a Category A infectious substance must be packaged and transported in accordance with the HMR.

<http://phmsa.dot.gov/portal/site/PHMSA/menuitem.6f23687cf7b00b0f22e4c6962d9c8789/?vgnextoid=4d1800e36b978410VgnVCM100000d2c97898RCRD&vgnnextchannel=d248724dd7d6c010VgnVCM10000080e8a8c0RCRD&vgnnextfmt=print>

Contact your local county health department to report persons with suspected Ebola Viral Disease. "The public safety mission is to identify suspect cases, isolate the patient and inform the local county health department."

For more information go to Florida Department of Health Ebola website

<http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/ebola/index.html>

Center for Disease Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-emergency-medical-services-systems-911-public-safety-answering-points-management-patients-known-suspected-united-states.html>

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Send feedback comments or suggestions to: [Fusionfeedback@fdle.state.fl.us](mailto:Fusionfeedback@fdle.state.fl.us) (Please reference the Brief #).

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