

**St. John Ambulance
National Headquarters**

**National Patient Care Policy
with regard to
Personal Protective Equipment
and
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome**

- 01. Public Health authorities have not recommended the cancellation of any public events or closed any locations of public gatherings. This is based on the best, current scientific evidence on the mode of transmission of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).**
- 02. The provision of patient care services at public duty locations should continue unless advised otherwise by a Medical Officer of Health.**
- 03. St. John Ambulance volunteers must continue to use universal precautions/body substance precautions. This includes frequent hand washing whether, or not, gloves are worn.**
- 04. St. John Ambulance volunteers who are called upon to treat a patient who is exhibiting symptoms consistent with SARS, should also, as a minimum, wear a protective facemask ("N95" or other acceptable design). The most up-to-date symptoms can be found on the Health Canada website and include, but are not limited to:**
 - a. temperature greater than 38 degrees Celsius,**
 - b. symptoms consistent with influenza.**
- 05. Protective apparel (gowns, goggles, facemasks, etc.) is not required on a routine basis while on public duty.**
- 06. St. John Ambulance volunteers, who believe that their patient is exhibiting symptoms consistent with SARS, should be directed to contact their local Medical Officer of Health (or designate) to determine the best disposition for their patient. Unless the patient's condition is critical or life-threatening, they should not be referred to a hospital emergency room. Rather, they should follow the instructions provided by the Medical Officer of Health.**
- 07. All St. John Ambulance Councils are to ensure that all personnel are provided with the appropriate telephone numbers in order to achieve Item 06 above.**

08. All St. John Ambulance Councils are to ensure that all personnel have access to the necessary supplies in order to practice proper universal precautions/body substance precautions. These supplies include, but are not limited to:

- a. artificial respiration face shield,
- b. gloves,
- c. disposable gowns,
- d. goggles, and
- e. facemasks.

During this current public health emergency, accessing personal protective equipment may prove problematic. If current suppliers are unable to meet our requirements, assistance should be sought from Provincial/Territorial Ministries of Health or local/municipal Boards of Health.

“Access to the necessary supplies”, does not imply that each volunteer must be issued with personal protective equipment. Rather, a minimum supply should be available at each public duty location and in each Mobile First Aid Post. It is only required when treating patients as outlined in Item 04 above.

09. This “Policy” is to be used as a companion document to the “National Emergency Response Protocol” issued on 29 March 2003 and the directive on SARS issued by the National Medical Officer on 21 March 2003.
10. The National Planning Officer is to be notified immediately of any real, or possible, direct exposure of a St. John Ambulance volunteer to a patient exhibiting SARS symptoms.

Wm. Alexander
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St. John Ambulance
National Headquarters

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