



## San Benito County Emergency Medical Services Agency

### RESPIRATORY BORNE ILLNESS

Policy : R-3  
Effective : May 1, 2010  
Reviewed : May 1, 2010

**Overview:** The presence of Respiratory Borne Illness should be considered for all patients. For those patients presenting with cough, **difficulty** breathing, or an unknown illness, the following protocol should be followed by **ALL** EMS responders – BLS and ALS.

I. Any EMS responder approaching the patient should wear an N-95 mask.

II. Obtain an appropriate **history**:

1. If patient **doesn't have** cough or difficulty breathing, then go to the usual protocol for patient's chief complaint. No Respiratory Borne Illness infection control is needed.
2. If patient **has** cough or difficulty breathing but has no **risk factors\*** for Respiratory Borne Illness exposure then go to the usual protocol for patient's chief complaint. No infection control is needed.
3. If patient **has** cough or difficulty breathing and **has risk factors** for Respiratory Borne Illness exposure **or risk factors are unknown**, then **ALL EMS responders should adhere to droplet and contact infection control guidelines\*\*** and go to the usual protocol for patient's chief complaint. Make early Base contact for information purposes.

#### **\*Risk Factors:**

- 1) The patient has **traveled** to an area (or passed through the airport) with documented or suspected community transmission of Respiratory Borne Illness in **the 10 days prior** to becoming ill;

**Or**

- 2) The patient has had **close contact** with a person who is ill with a cough and/or difficulty breathing **and the close contact person has traveled** to an area (or passed through the airport) with documented or suspected community transmission of Respiratory Borne Illness in the **10 days prior** to becoming ill.

**\*\* Droplet and Contact Information Control Guidelines:**

- 1) For the EMS Responder: Eye covering, N-95 mask, disposable gown, gloves.
- 2) For the patient: A surgical mask, or if this is not tolerated, an oxygen mask or non-rebreather mask with high flow O<sub>2</sub>.
- 3) Extensive decontamination is unnecessary but the ambulance interior should be wiped down with the usual cleaning product.
- 4) Clothing or disposable equipment is not considered a biohazard and can be disposed of in a plastic bag in the trash.
- 5) Use good hand hygiene and wash hands after removing gloves. If hands are not visibly contaminated may use waterless hand wash.

**DEFINITIONS:**

- 1) Close contact: Close contact is defined as having cared for, having lived with, or having direct contact with respiratory secretions and/or body fluids of a person.

## Respiratory Borne Illness EMS Algorithm:

