Clinical Operating Policy (COP) 2090 – Guidelines for Responding to High Risk Infectious Diseases

I. Purpose

To provide EMTs and Paramedics with operational procedures for identifying, assessing, and safely managing patients with High Risk Infectious Diseases (HRID) while protecting EMS personnel and preventing disease transmission in Kitsap County operations.

II. Scope

This COP applies to EMTs and Paramedics responding to patients with suspected or confirmed High Risk Infectious Diseases acquired outside of North America, including Ebola, MERS, SARS, hemorrhagic fevers, and measles. Special focus is on HRID infections requiring enhanced PPE and decontamination procedures.

III. Policy

EMTs and Paramedics will use graded PPE protocols based on patient symptoms and travel history to prevent HRID transmission. All personnel will follow enhanced screening, assessment, and decontamination procedures when treating patients with infectious symptoms and recent international travel history.

IV. Procedure / Operating Guidelines

A. Initial Assessment and Screening

1. **KITSAP 911 call receivers will:** a. Question callers reporting fever >100.4°F, headache, sore throat, muscle aches, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained bleeding about travel history b. Ask: "Have you traveled outside the United States in the past 30 days?" c. If yes, ask: "Where have you traveled in the last 30 days, or have you traveled to a foreign country with a known Highly Infectious Disease outbreak?" d. Notify responding crews with "Infectious Disease-Travel History" message when travel to outbreak regions is confirmed
2. **EMTs and Paramedics will:** a. Don appropriate PPE before patient contact based on risk assessment guidelines b. Perform initial assessment from 6 feet distance when infectious disease is suspected c. Obtain complete travel and exposure history during patient assessment d. Assess for high-risk symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, and bleeding

B. PPE Selection and Implementation

1. **No infectious symptoms:** a. Use routine PPE: gloves and eyewear

2. **Infectious symptoms with no travel history OR travel history without high-risk fluid exposure:** a. Use routine infectious disease PPE: gown, gloves, eyewear, N95 mask
3. **Infectious symptoms with travel to outbreak region AND high risk of blood/body fluid exposure:** a. Use high-risk (high containment) PPE: impermeable TyChem gown, double gloves, eyewear/faceshield, N95 mask, surgical hood covering head/neck b. Remove jewelry and uniforms before donning high-risk PPE c. Have PPE checked by team member to ensure no skin exposure d. Limit personnel entering "Hot Zone" to 1-2 providers necessary for patient care

C. Healthcare Facility Transport Requests

1. **From St. Michael's affiliated clinics or Silverdale ED:** a. Summon HRID transport vehicle (North Kitsap Fire & Rescue or Olympic Ambulance) b. Don routine infectious disease PPE for initial assessment from 6 feet c. Allow facility staff already in high-risk PPE to transport patient in HRID vehicle d. Provide patient care only at St. Michael's staff request
2. **From non-St. Michael's affiliated clinics:** a. Perform initial assessment in routine ID PPE from 6 feet distance b. If patient has infectious symptoms, travel history to outbreak country, and vomiting/diarrhea/bleeding: back out, summon HRID transport vehicle, don high-risk PPE c. If no travel/exposure history: transport using routine infection control procedures

D. High-Risk Patient Management

1. **EMTs and Paramedics will:** a. Limit pre-hospital care to assessment and transport when possible b. Use ALS interventions only for altered mental status, respiratory rate >30/min, or signs of shock c. Administer only oral/sublingual medications (anti-emetics) when possible d. Place IVs only for shock signs with transport time over 20 minutes e. Consider severe symptom patients as DNR/DNI per protocol
2. **Communication procedures:** a. Have Duty Chief summon HRID transport vehicle via phone to KITSAP 911 b. Conduct all subsequent communications by phone to minimize radio traffic c. Contact Kitsap County Public Health at (360) 337-5235 for special handling instructions d. Notify Base Station medical control at St. Michael's prior to transport

E. Decontamination and Safety

1. **Personnel decontamination:** a. Complete decontamination at receiving hospital using their specific procedures b. Follow procedures similar to hazmat suit removal c. Use additional personnel for safe decontamination when needed d. Complete decontamination before returning to service
2. **Vehicle and equipment:** a. Dispose of all PPE and medical waste at receiving hospital per their protocol b. Decontaminate transport vehicle using viricidal agent per CDC guidelines c. Ensure HRID transport vehicle is properly prepared with high-risk PPE cache

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F. Exposure Management and Follow-up

1. **Contact documentation:** a. Document all crew member "contact" with suspected HRID patients b. Wait in designated hospital area until test results return c. Create exposure roster for all involved personnel if patient tests positive d. Monitor all exposed personnel for fever for 21 days post-contact
2. **High-risk exposure response:** a. Stop work immediately if direct contact with blood/body fluids occurs b. Wash affected skin with soap and water or disinfectant c. Irrigate exposed mucous membranes copiously d. Notify supervisor immediately and complete full decontamination
3. **Personnel restrictions:** a. Low-risk personnel (no blood/fluid exposure) may return to normal duty b. High-risk personnel must be restricted from patient care for 21-day monitoring period c. Follow MSO/infection control officer guidance per DOH and CDC advisement

V. References

NWREMS 2024 Protocols - Infectious Disease and PPE Standards

CDC Guidelines for HRID Response and Decontamination

Washington State DOH Infectious Disease Control Requirements

Kitsap County Public Health Disease Investigation Procedures

St. Michael's Medical Center HRID Protocol and Decontamination Procedures

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Bloodborne Pathogen Standards

VI. Review and Approval

Medical Program Director: _____ Date: 03/08/2026

Fire Chief: Jim Gillard _____ Date: Jun 11, 202

Effective Date: 6/11/2026

Next Review Date: 06/11/2029