

Federal Healthcare Resilience Work Group

EMS/Prehospital Team

COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Clinicians

Product (EMS53) Purpose

This document is designed to serve as an information resource for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) clinicians and agencies who are seeking to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines and reduce vaccine hesitancy among EMS clinicians. This document includes a summary of current information as well as a resource section. This guidance applies to all EMS delivery models including but not limited to; free standing, municipal third-service, fire-based, hospital-based, private, independent, volunteer, and related EMS clinicians.

Developed By

The Federal Healthcare Resilience Working Group (HRWG), formerly the Healthcare Resilience Task Force (HRTF), is leading the development of a comprehensive strategy for the U.S. healthcare system to facilitate resiliency and responsiveness to the threats posed by COVID-19. The Working Group's EMS/Pre-Hospital Team is comprised of public and private-sector EMS and 911 experts from a wide variety of agencies and focuses on responding to the needs of the pre-hospital community. This team is composed of subject matter experts from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), National 911 Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), U.S. Army, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and consults with non-federal partners representing stakeholder groups and areas of expertise. Through collaboration with experts in related fields, the team develops practical resources for field providers, supervisors, administrators, medical directors and associations to better respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Intended Audience

State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Governments (SLTTs) EMS and 911 agencies

Primary Point of Contact

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EMS clinicians are routinely in contact with components of the health system and the community at large and are at higher risk for exposure to persons with suspected and known SARS-CoV-2 infection in confined spaces. Vaccination of this essential workforce is a priority as it protects frontline workers, keeps the necessary health systems in operation, and in turn protects vulnerable groups and communities

from additional harm. For more information on how vaccine prioritization is decided please see the [CDC recommendations process page](#). These are unprecedented times and require unprecedented interventions to keep yourself, your peers, your family, and your patients safe.



Educate yourself, crew and family members on the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and dispel myths. Visit the [CDC website](#) to learn more.



Research locations in your area that provide COVID-19 vaccines. In most states, EMS is in a priority group for vaccination as EMS clinicians have been on the front lines throughout the pandemic. Vaccination is an important tool to help keep EMS clinicians and their families safe. To be vaccinated, please check with your EMS agency. If they are not coordinating vaccination of EMS clinicians, then contact your local health department to identify a vaccination site. In the future, when COVID-19 vaccine is more widely available to the public, you may use [VaccineFinder.org](#) as a resource to locate vaccines near you.

Supervisors: Consider the Following Tips to Protect your Crews:



Maintain CDC guidance and departmental policies; require crew members to check for COVID-19 symptoms prior to reporting to work. Disseminate relevant information about how EMS clinicians can be vaccinated. Clearly communicate about what you can and cannot control about obtaining vaccines. Work to facilitate staff vaccination through staffing flexibilities and agency specific vaccination events.



Provide factual information to EMS clinicians on the available COVID-19 vaccines ([CDC Vaccine Product information page](#)). Also identify resources for clinicians to gather additional information regarding any history of [allergies](#) or medical conditions that might affect vaccination. See the [CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#) page. Encourage enrollment in the [CDC v-safe after vaccine health checker](#).

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COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine FAQs

Will the vaccine give me the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 disease?

No. The vaccine will not cause you to get the SARS-CoV-2 virus or COVID-19 disease. None of the currently available COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 disease so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19 disease. There are several different types of vaccines in development. All of them teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19. See also [CDC facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

Will this messenger RNA affect my DNA or genetic composition?

No. Messenger RNA does not get into the nucleus of the cell or affect your DNA. For more information please see the CDC sites [Understanding How COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#) and [Understanding and explaining mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

Are there side effects?

There may be side effects related to administration of any vaccine. Generally, the side effects are mild, short lived, and result from the vaccine activating your immune system (which is what we want to occur). Please see [CDC ensuring the safety of COVID-19 vaccines site](#) and the [CDC Selected Adverse Events Reported after COVID-19 Vaccination site](#) for more information.

Are there personal considerations (allergies, preexisting conditions, etc.) that prevent you from being a vaccine candidate?

Carefully look over any information given to you regarding the vaccine and discuss any personal health consideration with your provider. For more information see CDC Interim Clinical Considerations for Use of mRNA COVID-19

This technology is new and came out fast; is it safe?

Yes, the authorized mRNA vaccines are safe and effective. The research that serves as the foundation for mRNA vaccines has been going on for decades. Although these specific vaccines were developed during the pandemic, the foundational research is well established. All vaccines, including the mRNA vaccines, are assessed in large clinical trials and with rigorous safety monitoring before being authorized or approved for use by the FDA. The CDC and FDA will continue monitoring the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines after authorization. Here is a [chart](#) detailing the steps that these vaccines went through from vaccine development to Emergency Use Authorization. Safety monitoring has, to date, been reassuring that mRNA vaccines are safe. See this CDC [ensuring COVID-19 vaccine safety page](#) for more information.

I've already had COVID-19; should I get vaccinated?

Yes, you should be vaccinated. It is currently unknown how long natural immunity lasts in an individual, and reinfection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19 disease is possible. For those with current SARS-CoV-2 infection vaccination should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person had symptoms) and criteria have been met for the person

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to discontinue isolation. This recommendation applies to persons who experience SARS-CoV-2 infection before receiving any vaccine doses as well as those who experience SARS-CoV-2 infection after the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine but before receipt of the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. For those who received monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma as part of their treatment for COVID-19, the administration of the vaccine should be delayed at least 90 days. See the CDC [Interim Clinical Considerations page](#) or [FAQ page](#) for more information.

Do I still need to wear a mask and practice social distancing?

Yes. Although initial trials suggest most people will be protected from getting ill from COVID-19 after vaccination, it is not yet known if vaccination will prevent infection and transmission to others. No vaccination is 100% effective. Remember you can be infectious while asymptomatic. Vaccination is one tool to protect you and fight the pandemic. We will need everyone to use all the tools available to help end this pandemic.

Resources

How an RNA Vaccine Would Work: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-54873105> *

Oxford Vector Vaccine: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55041371> *

NIH COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Workers:
https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/public/hasl_get_blob.cfm?ID=12583

Messaging resources:

Healthcare resilience working group prehospital EMS team videos:

Video 1: <https://vimeo.com/492847212/3682909c4c>

Video 2: <https://vimeo.com/492847424/d5a17f6b4c>

Covid-19 Vaccine Informational Webinar by Dr. Peter Antevy:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZbAY6010ME> *

Dr. Will Smith COVID 19 Vaccination section for REFRESH2021: <https://vimeo.com/492698626> *

Town hall by NAEMT, NASEMSO and NAEMSP: <https://youtu.be/DwbZtN9jq74> *

MIEMSS vaccine myths video: <https://www.miemss.org/media/videos/The-Vaccine-Fact-vs-Fiction-rev.mp4> *

Prince Georges Fire Department (PGFD) Firefighter Steve Collins' message to get the vaccine video:
<https://fb.watch/3pbCRfTXx-/> *