

# OFAA protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, occupational first aid attendants (OFAAs) continue to provide treatment to workers as necessary. Because of the possibility of community infection, you may need to modify your standard protocols for first aid treatment to reduce the potential for transmission. This document provides additional precautions in your procedures you may take to align with current public health directives such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, and disinfection.

- 1** When you receive a call for first aid, if possible, gather the following information:
  - What are the circumstances surrounding the call for assistance?
  - Are critical interventions likely required? If so, call 911 or have emergency transport vehicle (ETV) prepared.
  - Are there any obvious signs of COVID-19?
  - If the patient is stable, has mild symptoms, or is not in distress, instruct the patient to go for testing.
  - If the patient is having difficulty breathing, arrange for transport to a hospital (and call ahead).
- 2** If no critical interventions are required, if possible and appropriate, interview the patient from at least 2 m (6 ft.). Ask the following questions:
  - Is anyone in your household sick or in self-isolation due to COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19?
  - Have you been in contact with anyone who has been sick with COVID-19?
- 3** When you arrive at the patient's location, assess the situation:
  - Does the patient have a minor injury that the patient can self-treat while you provide direction and supplies?
  - If yes, direct the patient to self-treat per your OFA protocols (see the self-treatment scenario on page 3).
- 4** If providing direct patient care (within 2 m), don the appropriate level of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the situation. PPE could include the following items:
  - Surgical mask
  - Face shield (or safety eyewear, i.e., safety glasses or goggles)
  - Pocket mask with a one-way valve and filter
  - Gloves
  - Coveralls (disposable or washable)
  - Patients could don a surgical mask or pocket mask, or clear face shield

In view of the global scarcity of PPE supplies, we recommend a point-of-care assessment by the provider and diligent use of PPE as required.

- 5 Remove and wash any PPE that is not disposable by following the BC Centre for Disease Control's directives for **cleaning and disinfecting eye and facial protection**:
- Don a new pair of gloves.
  - Using a clean cloth, wipe with soap and water, cleaning from the inside to the outside.
  - Rinse with water and remove excess water.
  - Using one disinfectant wipe at a time, and first squeezing excess disinfectant into a sink to prevent splashing your face, thoroughly wipe the interior then the exterior of the facial protection.
  - Ensure all surfaces remain wet with disinfectant for at least one minute (or applicable disinfectant wipe contact time).
  - Equipment may be rinsed with tap water if visibility is compromised by residual disinfectant.
  - Allow to dry (air dry or use clean absorbent towel).
  - Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.
  - Store in a designated clean area.
- 6 For further direction on safe donning and doffing procedures refer to the BC Centre for Disease Control's instructions for **donning and doffing PPE**.

If critical interventions are required and there is no way of determining background information, anyone providing close assistance (2 m or closer) should don appropriate PPE. Limit access to the patient to the number of people required to deal with the critical intervention. It is important to limit the exposure of others.

## CPR and AED protocols

OFAAs should perform compression-only CPR during the COVID-19 pandemic. If there is more

than one trained rescuer with the required PPE, change places for performing compressions approximately every minute, as performing continuous compressions at a rate of 100 per minute will be fatiguing with full PPE on.

### C.P.R — OFA Level 1 and OFA Level 2

Upon approaching the scene, the OFAA conducts a scene assessment and dons appropriate PPE. Once PPE is on, the OFAA approaches the patient and applies appropriate PPE, i.e., clear face shield, on the patient and ensures an open airway. If no air movement is felt the OFAA is to start continuous chest compression at a rate of 100 per minute.

### C.P.R — OFA Level 3

Upon approaching the scene, the OFAA conducts a scene assessment and dons appropriate PPE. Once PPE is on, the OFAA approaches the patient and applies appropriate PPE, i.e., clear face shield, on the patient and ensures an open airway. If no air movement is felt, the OFAA is to check for a carotid pulse, and if no pulse is felt, the OFAA is to start continuous chest compression at a rate of 100 per minute.

### Assisted ventilation — OFA Level 3

If assessment of a patient determines distressed breathing and assisted ventilation is required, the OFAA should use a Bag-Valve Mask rather than a pocket mask. Ensure any trained helper(s) don appropriate PPE (surgical mask and face shield) prior to assisting.

### AED — Level 1, 2, & 3

While providing compression-only CPR, when and if an AED becomes available stop compressions and prepare the patient's chest, apply AED pads and allow AED to analyze. After no shock/shock advised, give 2 minutes of compression only CPR. Repeat cycles of analyze/shock or no shock and 2 minutes of compression only CPR until medical aid arrives.

## Scenario: Self-treatment with direction

A first aid attendant receives a call stating a worker has injured her hand. The attendant collects as much information about the severity of the injury as possible. The injury is deemed to be minor with no other concerns, so the attendant goes to the worker, but stays 2 m (6 ft.) away. On arrival, the attendant asks:

- Is anyone sick or in self-isolation in your household due to COVID-19?
- Are you able to administer first aid to yourself if I tell you what to do and how to do it?

After the first aid attendant has conducted the interview, the attendant visually assesses the patient and the wound from a distance and asks the patient about underlying conditions relating to the injury.

The attendant then places the required first aid supplies on a surface 2 m from the patient. The attendant steps back and directs the patient to pick up and apply the supplies. The first aid attendant then verbally conducts a modified secondary survey and documents the findings.

## Scenario: OFA Level 1 and Level 2 with an intervention

A first aid attendant receives a call about a worker who has been struck in the head and is unresponsive. The attendant immediately ensures that 911 is called. On approaching the scene, the first aid attendant conducts a scene assessment and dons appropriate PPE, i.e., surgical mask, face shield, gloves, etc. Once PPE is on, the attendant approaches the patient and places appropriate PPE, i.e., clear face shield, on patient prior to conducting the primary survey and performing any critical interventions that are required. The attendant positions the patient in the three-quarter-prone position to ensure the airway is open and clear and no further interventions are needed. Only one

person (the attendant) needs to be in contact with the patient; all others stay 2 m away. The attendant monitors the patient until the ambulance arrives.

## Scenario: OFA Level 3 — employer ETV for transport with intervention

A first aid attendant receives a call about a worker who has been struck in the head and is unresponsive. The attendant immediately arranges for the ETV to be ready. On approaching the scene, the first aid attendant conducts a scene assessment and dons appropriate PPE. Once PPE is on, the first aid attendant approaches the patient and applies appropriate PPE, i.e., a clear face shield, on the patient and ensures an open airway. Once the airway is open and clear, the attendant stabilizes the patient's head with an inanimate object (to free the attendant's hands) and inserts an oropharyngeal airway to protect and maintain the airway. Once completed, the attendant conducts a primary survey to determine what, if any, further critical interventions are required. Only one person (the attendant) needs to be in contact with the patient; all others can stay 2 m away.

If the first aid attendant is working alone or if there is no extra PPE on site for helpers, the attendant places the patient in the three-quarter-prone position and packages the patient. Helpers will be needed to assist the first aid attendant in lifting the patient into the basket and ETV. Use whatever PPE or other measures that are available to assist in providing a barrier between these helpers and the patient, including covering the patient with a blanket. Helpers without PPE should handle the lower extremities and stay as far away from patient's nose and mouth as possible. Once the patient is loaded, the helpers remove their PPE and perform hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.