



April 4, 2020

SIREMS Personnel:

Yesterday, the CDC released a recommendation the public consider wearing a cloth face covering in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, like grocery stores and pharmacies, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. This recommendation is based on recent studies showing a significant number of people infected with COVID-19 can be either asymptomatic or take days to become symptomatic. The cloth face coverings will reduce the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the droplets released from speaking, coughing, or sneezing by those infected but non-symptomatic.

The CDC states the following in the recommendation:

“The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.”

The CDC guidance for PPE use by EMS has not changed. If any changes in EMS PPE guidance are recommended by CDC or IDPH, those changes will be pushed out by email and posted on www.sirems.com.

If you have any questions about the CDC’s recommendation on cloth face coverings, please visit the CDC’s page on the face covering recommendation which is linked on our website. As always, feel free to contact the EMS Office with any questions or concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Haake MD".

Joseph R. Haake, MD, FACEP
EMS Medical Director
Southern Illinois Regional EMS System