



The Monitor

The monthly electronic newsletter for the Southern Illinois Regional EMS System.

March 2020

COMMAND: Dr. Haake wants to remind everyone to participate in and remind others of the Change your Clocks-Change your Batteries initiative this weekend. Even though our cell phones and smart watches set themselves, those batteries in smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and NOAA weather radios can't change themselves.

Also, if any EMS personnel or an ambulance service is interested in additions or modifications to our EMS System policies/protocols, please send those proposals to the EMS Office by email. Dr. Haake would like to hear your ideas this way instead of attempting to have these discussions around patient care in the Emergency Department.

FINANCE: Our EMS Office is still working with other local and national groups on possible EMS grant opportunities. Questions may be distributed for survey or application information in the near future. If there are any questions on requests received, please contact the EMS Office.

The IDPH EMS Assistance Grants have not been announced, as of today. We expect to hear news of the recipients soon.

LOGISTICS: EMR Non-Transport Agencies: Your EMR vehicle self-inspections are due by April 24, 2020. The EMR self-inspection form can be found on the IDPH website, www.dph.illinois.gov or on www.sirems.com under forms, at the bottom of the list.

Periodically check the newsfeed on www.sirems.com for the most recent COVID-19 updates. When the CDC or IDPH push out new information, it is placed on the system's website.

Don't forget the 13th of every month is SIREMS Triage Tag Day. On this day, every ambulance service crew should use a triage tag on at least one of their patients. Use the triage tag to document your initial assessment and care and deliver the patient to the ED with the tag. This monthly activity will familiarize EMS and ED staff with the use of triage tags, so when the MCI arrives, we won't feel as lost as last year's Easter egg.

For all EMS levels: CPR cards MUST be American Heart Association Healthcare Provider BLS cards, not AHA Heartsaver, Red Cross, or any other organization. Contact the EMS Office with any questions.

Starting April 1, 2020, the Illinois Department of Public Health will no longer provide an Illinois EMT, AEMT, or Paramedic exam. All cognitive testing previously handled by IDPH in partnership with Continental Testing will now be handled through the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians. Anyone testing after March 31, 2020 will take a National Registry written exam. For EMT level, NR testing will consist of the cognitive test only. For Paramedic, NR testing will be the cognitive test and the National Registry psychomotor testing stations. A FAQ document for the transition has been posted on www.sirems.com. For additional information, please contact the EMS Office.

OPERATIONS: Most recent COVID-19 updates. Keep in mind, there are already four strains of Coronavirus that are tested on the standard viral panel in the hospital. COVID-19 should be treated in the same fashion as we had previously handled SARS and MERS. Here are a few highlights from the recent guidance documents.

- Ask about recent travel from China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, and Iran or contact with someone exposed/suspected.
- Family or others that have been in contact with the COVID-19 patient shouldn't ride in the ambulance to the hospital, especially in the cab of the ambulance.
- Close the door or window between the cab and patient compartment.
- If possible, place a surgical mask on the patient to contain droplets expelled during coughing.
- EMS personnel treating the patient should wear appropriate PPE
 - Disposable isolation gown
 - Disposable exam gloves
 - Eye protection (goggles or face shield)
 - Respiratory protection (N-95 or higher level respirator)
- Preferably, the driver should not be part of the patient care team. If the driver must participate in the initial care, they should remove the PPE and perform hand hygiene before entering the cab.
- Avoid contacting yourself or any unnecessary equipment with gloved hands during treatment and transport.
- Clean and disinfect the vehicle and equipment according to agency and equipment standards. All PPE required for treatment will also be required for disinfection, minus the N-95 respirator.
 - Remember cleaners and disinfectants have standards for use. Most require being left wet on surfaces for periods of time to successfully disinfect a surface. Please familiarize yourself with the products used by your agency.
- Please refer to the www.sirems.com newsfeed for the most recent guidance documents.

Please review SIREMS protocol B-16 HELICOPTER SCENE RESPONSE. There are criteria established for when helicopter response can be considered. Though that list is not all inclusive and EMS may encounter a situation not listed, please familiarize yourself with the criteria in the protocol. Two very important items in the protocol that we want to stress this month are listed below.

- *Medical Control must be consulted when helicopter transport is being considered.*
- *Once the air ambulance is enroute to the scene, only Medical Control may make the determination to cancel the air ambulance response.*

When an ILS or ALS ambulance responds to a call, the Intermediate or Paramedic must perform an advanced level patient assessment before deciding to provide BLS treatment and transport. This advanced level patient assessment must also be documented on the patient care report (PCR).

PLANNING: Don't forget about our EMS Calendar at www.sirems.com

Mar 10: IDPH EMS Advisory Council, videoconference IDPH Office Marion

Mar 13: SIREMS Triage Tag Day

Mar 17: St. Patrick's Day

TIP OF THE MONTH: The month of March has Spring Break. Please watch for kids, bicycles, and pedestrians in areas that normally, during school hours, you would not expect them when responding to calls or transporting patients.

If you have any questions or information for "The Monitor", please contact me at Brad.Robinson@sih.net or SouthernIllinoisRegionalEMS@gmail.com (03-08-2020).