



The Monitor

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

December 2021

COMMAND: Dr. Haake wanted to thank you all for your continued efforts through the continued COVID pandemic. And, extra thanks to the personnel that have been doing more frequent and longer distant interfacility transfers because of the bed availability issues. Also, please be careful in the winter environment. Temperatures, moving patients, driving...there are many additional complications added to our jobs by Old Man Winter.

Lastly, have a safe and happy holiday season!!

FINANCE: The deadline for submissions of the IDPH EMS Assistance Grant was December 2, 2021. They are now in the regional review phase and will be moved from there to IDPH on January 7, 2022. Stay tuned.

LOGISTICS: Per IDPH emergency rule, Illinois EMS agencies must have all EMS personnel fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or tested for COVID-19 on a weekly basis. When the county of the EMS agency is listed by the CDC as a high or substantial transmission area, the non-vaccinated must be tested twice weekly. There are additional requirements in the emergency rule for vaccine training and postings. If there are any questions, please contact the EMS Office.

While discussing testing, SIREMS now has a protocol for EMS Agencies that want to host BianaxNow POC testing in-house. B-38 POINT OF CARE COVID-19 TESTING is posted on our website and available for review. The policy requires each interested department to submit their own plan, based on the B-38 requirements. Contact the EMS Office if your agency is interested or if you have questions.

Our EMS Office was notified by IDPH of a nationwide shortage of 10mL pre-filled normal saline syringes. Departments that utilize this item should be in contact with their suppliers and quickly consider conservation measures.

IDPH released a memo this month stating Paramedic program graduates may now apply for an Illinois Paramedic license without completing the National Registry Psychomotor Skill Stations. So, a Paramedic candidate can now complete system approved skill stations during or after their program and take the NR cognitive exam to be eligible for Illinois Paramedic licensure. However, the NR Psychomotor testing must be completed if the candidate wants to be registered with the National Registry. I know this may be

confusing, especially with the recent announcements about the NR eliminating their psychomotor exams in 2023. If you have any questions, please contact the EMS Office.

We usually talk about this more during the summer months, but don't forget about the SIREMS policy B-34 ENVIRONMENTAL TEMPERATURE CONTROL POLICY. Make sure your fluids and medications are stored at their recommended temperatures, especially not allowing them to freeze. Here's a link to the policy. Contact the EMS Office with any questions. [Microsoft Word - B-34 ENVIRONMENTAL TEMPERATURE CONTROL POLICY \(sirems.com\)](#)

OPERATIONS: With increasing cases in the region, here's a reminder of the COVID protocol.

Here are some bullet points to hit the high points of the COVID protocol:

- Continue to screen patients and obtain a temperature
- Full PPE will be worn if the patient screens positive
 - Under quarantine or isolation for positive test or awaiting results
 - Shows signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - Has been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive patient
- Negative screening will require minimum PPE of surgical mask and gloves
- All aerosolizing procedures (oxygen above 6LPM, nebulizers, suction, BVM ventilations, BIADs and intubation) can be performed with the use of full PPE, including gown, gloves, eye protection, and N95 or higher respiratory protection
- Protocol: [Microsoft Word - B-36 NOVEL CORONAVIRUS \(COVID-19\) PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE \(sirems.com\)](#)

Please leave your PCRs at the receiving facility before leaving or as soon as possible if you must leave for another call or coverage. The hospitals and the EMS Office are constantly chasing PCRs that have not been faxed over or left at the facility. This is not isolated to SIH hospitals or our EMS System. Other hospitals and EMS Systems are looking at this problem, including enforcement through IDPH.

Be suspicious of carbon monoxide exposure while taking care of patients this time of year. CO is an odorless and colorless gas that is a byproduct of incomplete combustion. It can cause our patients to present with a headache, weakness, dizziness, nausea & vomiting, dyspnea, blurred vision, confusion, and loss of consciousness. And remember, CO binds to hemoglobin on the red blood cell over 200 times more readily than oxygen.

During the start of winter, consider how rapidly hypothermia can set in now that ambient temperatures are starting to drop. Hypothermia can occur indoors with a patient on a tile floor for an extended period of time just as much as being exposed to the elements outside.

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

December 25: Christmas Day

January 01: New Year's Day

TIP OF THE MONTH: Consider carrying a few pairs of cheap jersey gloves in your EMS coat. If you are on an outside scene for more than a few minutes, place them over your nitrile gloves. They are a cheap way to save your fingers and if they are very soiled with dirt or blood, just throw them away.

If you have any questions or information for "The Monitor", please contact me at Brad.Robinson@sih.net or SouthernIllinoisRegionalEMS@gmail.com (12-21-2021).