

# OFAA protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic

## A guide for employers and occupational first aid attendants

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 you may take to include public health directives such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, and disinfection in your procedures.

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 an emergency transport vehicle (ETV) prepared.
  - Are there any obvious signs of COVID-19? If so, send the patient home or to a hospital.
2. If no critical interventions are required, if possible and appropriate, interview the patient from a distance. Ask the following questions:
  - Is anyone sick or in self-isolation in your household?
  - Have you been in contact with anyone who has been sick?
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 below).
4. If the patient can't self-treat, don the appropriate level of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the situation. PPE could include the following items:
    - Face shield or surgical-type mask
    - Pocket mask
    - Gloves
    - Coveralls (disposable or washable)
    - Apron or lab coat
    - Glasses or goggles

Because the global supply of PPE is scarce, you may need to consider other options. There are various types of masks, face shields, and respirators that you can consider.

5. After treatment, sanitize all equipment with either soap and water or 70% isopropyl alcohol. Remove and wash any PPE that is not disposable, as well as any exposed clothing. Wash your hands thoroughly. If critical interventions are required and there is no way of determining background information, don appropriate PPE and 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.

## 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 metres (about 6 feet) away. On arrival, the attendant asks:

- Is anyone sick or in self-isolation in your household?
- 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 metres 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 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. Once PPE is on, the attendant approaches the patient and conducts a primary survey to determine what, if any,

critical interventions are required. The attendant positions the patient in the three-quarter-prone position to ensure that 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 can stay 2 metres 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 attendant approaches 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 (OPA) to protect and maintain the airway. The attendant then 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 metres away.

Helpers will be needed to assist the first aid attendant in lifting the patient into the basket and ETV. Use any PPE or other measures available to provide a barrier between the helpers and the patient, including covering the patient with a blanket. Once the patient is loaded, ensure the helpers remove their PPE and wash their hands with soap and water.

## Additional resources

Below are links to key resources from the public health agencies that are providing guidance on COVID-19.

### Public health agency websites

For more information about the COVID-19 situation, including public health alerts and FAQs, please see the COVID-19 pages on the following websites:

- [HealthLinkBC](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

### Self-assessment tool

The BC Ministry of Health has developed an online [BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help people determine whether you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

### Information for employers & businesses

The BC Centre for Disease Control has collected [COVID-19 information for Employers & Business](#), where you will find information for essential businesses.

### Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

To help support workplaces during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCOHS has made a number of online products and resources available on [its website](#).

### Phone resources

- 1.888.COVID19 (1.888.268.4319):  
For non-medical information about COVID-19. Available 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m., 7 days a week.
- 8-1-1 (HealthLink BC): To talk to a nurse if you need advice about how you are feeling and what to do next.