



COVID-19 Advice for University First Aiders

This guidance is for University First Aiders who, as part of their normal or voluntary roles, provide immediate first aid assistance requiring close contact until further medical assistance arrives. This activity may result in close contact with individuals with potential coronavirus infection (COVID-19).

In the current situation of sustained community transmission of COVID-19 in the UK, social distancing, the strict application of safe working practices (such as physical barriers) and, where social distancing cannot be maintained, the use of PPE, are recommended to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Transmission

From what we know about other coronaviruses, spread of COVID-19 is most likely to happen when there is close contact (within 2-metres or less) with an infected person. It is likely that the risk increases the longer someone has close contact with an infected person.

Respiratory secretions (droplets) containing the virus are likely to be the most important means of transmission; these are produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

There are two common routes people could become infected:

1. Secretions can be directly transferred into the mouths or noses of people who are nearby (within 2-metres) or possibly could be inhaled into the lungs.
2. It is possible that someone may become infected by touching a person, surface or object that has been contaminated with respiratory secretions and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes (such as shaking hands or touching door knobs then touching own face).

As there is currently sustained community transmission of COVID-19 throughout the UK, there is an increased likelihood of any individual in the community having the infection. This guidance is for all situations where close contact (defined as being within 2-metres of an individual) is required during First Aider duties.

Where possible, all contact with individuals should be carried out while maintaining social distancing measures – a distance of at least 2-metres (6 feet). Where this is not possible, other risk control measures should be applied, such as physical barriers and alternative working practices and, as a final measure, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). When dealing with minor First Aid situations, you may be able to instruct the injured person to take appropriate actions while maintaining a 2-metre distance, such as passing items to them for self-administration.

Hygiene measures

The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning and personal hand hygiene. An increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of all surfaces and equipment, using standard household cleaning and disinfection products, is recommended.

After contact with any individual or member of the public, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, or use alcohol hand sanitiser, at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all First Aid situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or the minimum 2-metre social distancing was maintained.

Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.

There are no additional precautions to be taken in relation to cleaning your clothing or uniform other than what is usual practice.

What to do if you are required to come into close contact with someone as part of your First Aider duties.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where it is not possible to maintain a 2-metre or more distance away from an individual, disposable gloves, a disposable fluid repellent surgical mask and a disposable apron are recommended. Disposable gloves should be worn if physical contact is likely to be made with potentially contaminated areas or items. The Safety Service will provide First Aid PPE for all Schools and Directorates and they should be stored in appropriate locations easily accessible to local First Aiders.

Staff responding to a medical emergency should wear a surgical face mask, disposable gloves and a disposable apron. An eye shield is included with the surgical masks and may be worn where you feel this control is necessary/preferred.

When using a surgical face mask, you should mould the metal strap of the mask over the bridge of the nose and make sure the mask fits snugly under the chin, around or across any facial hair if present. If the response requires you to administer first aid close to the casualty, an extra surgical mask will be provided. Where appropriate, for instance when dealing with a minor injury, please ask the person receiving treatment to also put a mask on.

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, or use alcohol sanitiser, after taking off PPE. In all circumstances where some form of PPE is used, the safe removal of the PPE is essential to avoid self-contamination. Please make yourself familiar with the following procedure regarding correct removal of gloves (overleaf):



Guidance on putting on and taking off PPE is included in the following link. Please familiarize yourself with this information.

[Guidance on putting on and taking off PPE.](#)

The gloves, aprons, face masks and eye shields are disposable and should be used only once, and should be replaced with a new items after use. Please contact the Safety Service for any required items.

Use and dispose of all contaminated items and disposable gloves, aprons, masks and eye shields as clinical waste (bagged and marked as clinical waste). Please contact your line manager or the Safety Service for advice on disposal if required.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

The British Resuscitation Council and St John Ambulance have recommended the following changes to CPR to minimize the transmission risk from COVID-19.

In adults, it is recommended that you **do not** perform rescue breaths or mouth-to-mouth ventilation; **perform chest compressions only**. Compression-only CPR may be as effective as combined ventilation and compression in the first few minutes.

How to do CPR on an adult - COVID-19 update



1. If someone is unconscious and not breathing normally, do not put your face near to theirs

2. Call for an ambulance



3. Use a towel or piece of clothing and lay it over the mouth and nose

4. Do not do mouth to mouth



5. Start chest compressions to the tempo of "Staying Alive"

6. Use a Public Access Defibrillator if available.

Source: Resuscitation Council UK

Find out how St John are supporting the NHS with the COVID-19 outbreak at sja.org.uk/COVID-19

St John
Ambulance



Resuscitation
Council UK

Should you have given mouth-to-mouth ventilation there are no additional actions to be taken other than to monitor yourself for symptoms of possible COVID-19 over the following 14 days.

Providing assistance to unwell individuals

If you need to provide assistance to an individual who is symptomatic and may have COVID-19 (that is any individual with a new, continuous cough and/or high temperature and/or loss of taste and smell), wherever possible, place the person in a location away from others. If there is no physically separate room, ask others who are not involved in providing assistance to stay at least 2-metres away from the individual. If barriers or screens are available, these may be used.

Cleaning the area where assistance was provided

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time in (such as corridors) but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned in the usual way. However, all surfaces that a symptomatic individual has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected.

If there has been a blood or body-fluid spill

Keep people away from the area. Place paper towels/blue roll onto the spill, and seek further advice from the University Cleaning services. Use a spill-kit if available, following the instructions provided with the spill-kit. Please contact Estates if further assistance is required.

Contacts of the person you have assisted

Advise anyone who had close contact with the individual that if they go on to develop symptoms of COVID-19 (continuous cough, fever), they should follow the advice on what to do on the NHS website.

What to do if you become unwell

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you will need to stay at home for seven days and follow the advice on the NHS website.

Concerns

The University recognises the valuable contribution that First Aiders make to ensure all of our University community are provided with assistance in emergency situations. However, we recognise that some individuals may have particular personal circumstances/concerns regarding continuing to provide First Aid. Please feel free to discuss any concerns with your line manager, Occupational Health or the Safety Service.

References:

HSE.GOV COVID-19: Guidance for First Responders
British Resuscitation Council

First Aid protective equipment:

Disposable gloves
Fluid repellent surgical face mask with eye shield
Disposable apron
Extra surgical mask
Clinical waste bag
Small bottle of hand sanitiser