Fact Sheet – Advice for non-health front line responders for novel coronavirus

7 February 2020 (Version 1)

An outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was detected in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China in late December 2019. It is called a ‘novel’ virus because it is new and has not been detected before this outbreak.

For the latest information about 2019-nCoV, please see the WA Health website at: https://ww2.health.wa.gov.au/sitecore/content/Healthy-WA/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus. Under Resources, a fact sheet provides commonly asked questions that may also apply to front line responders.

This fact sheet is intended to provide advice to non-health agencies, such as WA Police, whose employees may need to interact with persons who may have been exposed to 2019-nCoV.

How does 2019-nCoV spread?

2019-nCoV is most likely to spread from person to person through:
- direct contact with a person whilst they are infectious;
- contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes; or
- touching objects or surfaces that are contaminated by droplets from secretions coughed or sneezed from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

How can I reduce my risk?

As 2019-nCoV most likely spreads through direct contact with droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, casual contact with people who are not showing symptoms is not considered a high risk for infection.

The best way to protect yourself and others is to practise good hygiene by:
- Frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand gel;
- Refraining from touching mouth and nose;
- If coughing or sneezing, covering your nose and mouth with a paper tissue or flexed elbow. Dispose of the tissue immediately after use and perform hand hygiene; and
- Avoiding close contact with anyone who has a cold or flu-like symptoms (maintain a distance of at least 1 meter).

What should I do if I have contact with someone who is in self isolation?

The risk to front line responders is low if you have contact with people in self-isolation who are well.

If you have contact with someone who is in self isolation:
- A surgical mask should be given to the person in self quarantine to wear while interacting with you.
- Front line responders should also wear a surgical mask while interacting with people in self-isolation.
• Gloves should be worn when handling and receiving items from people in self-isolation.
• Hand sanitiser should be used before and after any contact with someone in self-isolation.
• Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre between yourself and the person in self-isolation.

What if I am required to assist a person with suspected or confirmed 2019-nCoV?

Front line responders should be advised to continue to follow their existing infection prevention work instructions when in contact with ill people. For persons ill with 2019-nCoV, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) includes:

• Wearing a protective mask, gown, and eye protection;
• Using a CPR mask if administering CPR;
• Treating body fluids as potentially infectious; and
• Disposing of used PPE carefully in biohazard bags.