



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY
STATE 911 DEPARTMENT

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COVID-19 and Confidential Information

Please be informed that State 911 Department (Department), in coordination with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS), is actively engaged in discussions on the monitoring and mitigation strategies regarding COVID-19.

On March 10, 2020, Governor Charlie Baker declared a state of emergency, giving the Administration more flexibility to respond to the Coronavirus outbreak. The Administration continues to take steps to limit the spread of COVID-19. These steps include extraordinary efforts designed to curtail the spread of the virus, and present a tremendous challenge to employees. Everywhere, this challenge is being met with determination, courage and ingenuity, particularly at our public safety answering points (PSAP).

As a telecommunicator, you are acting as the Commonwealth's first line of response to critical emergency care. The State 911 Department has been advised that the three approved Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) vendors for Massachusetts have communicated with the PSAPs and regional emergency communication centers (RECC) regarding the COVID-19 virus. Each PSAP and RECC has been advised of the appropriate EMD protocols pertaining to the COVID-19 virus.

The State 911 Department has recommended that when dispatching first responders to calls for flu like symptoms, that the dispatcher follow local dispatch policies but to include advising first responders (Police, Fire, EMS) to respond using PPE (Personal Protection Equipment), a known term to first responders.

These changes prompt an important reminder with respect to confidential and personal information being received from callers. The integrity of confidential and personal information is critical to maintain public confidence in our 911 system. For this reason, the State Ethics Commission has prohibited the disclosure of confidential information acquired by employees during the course of his/her official duties. M.G.L.c. 268A, § 23(c). We hope this reminder serves to make you more vigilant in protecting the confidential and personal information of our citizens.