



28 April 2020

This is a member update from UNISON Ambulance

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

UNISON advice to ambulance members on PPE:

- Individual risk assessments should be the main factor in deciding your level of PPE.
- A minimum of level 2 PPE (disposable gloves, disposable apron, fluid repellent surgical mask, eye protection (if risk of splashing)) is recommended to use for all patients.
- Don't put yourself at risk. If you don't have the correct PPE to treat a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patient you should request back up from a resource with the correct PPE.

Message from the General Secretary

Our General Secretary, Dave Prentis, has recently written a blog on PPE stating very clearly that you should be safe from harm while at work and that UNISON will support members who enforce their rights to have the right level of protection at work. The full blog can be read [here](#).

PPE for Chest Compressions

UNISON nationally has been raising your concerns on the conflicting advice from Public Health England (PHE) and the Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) on the appropriate level of PPE to use when commencing chest compressions. The PPE advice issued by PHE sets out the minimum standards to help employers and workers to decide what is needed in the circumstances that they face. PHE recognise that some employers are putting in place increased levels of PPE above their advice and have confirmed they have no issue with this. UNISON ambulance branches are raising this with all the ambulance services with a view to ensuring that members have the maximum level of protection when undertaking chest compressions.

Although there is a limited national and global supply of PPE members should remember that risk assessments are the main factor in determining your level of PPE. When carrying out dynamic risk assessments members should be



supported by their employer in their decisions about what PPE to wear in the circumstances they are working in at the time.

It is UNISON's position that the health and safety of members should be paramount and members should prioritise taking appropriate precautions to protect themselves. In doing so you should feel confident that you have the full support of your trade union.

Reporting problems with PPE

UNISON is leading the way in the ambulance sector bringing your concerns with PPE to the highest levels of government, the NHS and with ambulance employers.

If you are having problems with the supply or quality of PPE members should raise these with your employer and UNISON branch in the first instance. Our ambulance branches have been very successful in ensuring employers provide staff with the PPE that they need.

You can also raise your concerns nationally through the UNISON PPE alert [hotline](#). We want to collect stories from as many members as possible so that we can make sure the prime minister and other senior politicians hear what you have to say.

UNISON has also started a petition demanding proper PPE for every member of staff who needs it. Please sign it [here](#) and share it with your friends and family.

Health and wellbeing support for ambulance staff

UNISON has worked with employers and the other ambulance trade unions to create an online resource that directs ambulance staff to health and wellbeing support that might be needed during or after the COVID-19 response.

The resource can be found [here](#).

Remember if you don't have the right PPE don't put yourself at risk.