



Unite Ambulance OPC Statement
Re: Chest Compressions as an Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP) and level of PPE protection to be worn

Firstly, on behalf of our committee I would like to say thank you to all members in our ambulance sector for the exceptional work you are doing. All members of the committee are on the front line ourselves and know the issues we are all facing. Whatever role you play to keep our ambulance services going – whether this be patient facing, call handling, logistics, estates or management – this applies to all. The roles we have in our sector are too numerous to mention but are all equally important.

As a National committee we have been having regular fortnightly teleconferences to share what the issues are during the current pandemic from around the UK and unsurprisingly these are all almost identical. We have representatives from most of the areas of the UK including all 4 countries and so can share information to enable best practise to be shared.

One of the biggest concerns to our members currently is that of **Personal Protective Equipment or PPE** – both shortages and inconsistency or variations and what level to be worn in different situations.

I recently circulated a letter to all members which I wrote to Public Health England (PHE) on behalf of the committee and you, as members.

The letter concerned the issue of Chest Compressions being included as an Aerosol Generating Procedure (AGP) in cases of Cardiac arrest. If chest compressions are NOT classed as an AGP – that means Level 2 PPE would be worn and not Level 3. The need to write to PHE came from their decision to ignore the recommendations from the Resus Council UK (RCUK) in connection with this issue and instead follow the guidance from NERVTAG. This line was then adopted by the Ambulance Association of Chief Executives or AACE – so was therefore also adopted by the majority of Trusts, excluding Wales. The reply from PHE was, as expected very vague and does not clarify the issue at all. Unite have also written to the HCPC for clarification on this issue and whether members would be subject to Fitness to Practice Hearings in this respect.

The Unite National Ambulance Organising Professional Committee (OPC) advises any member that feel they are being put at risk, MUST highlight this to their employing Trust/Board. This should be done in line with your local reporting procedures – usually DATIX, in connection with the individual job. Also, if you have any concerns after carrying out a Dynamic Risk Assessment on scene – Unite will support any decision where a member insists on donning Level 3 PPE before continuing with the detail.

These are incredibly difficult moral decisions we are being expected to make and our intention is to support you as much as possible. Please stay safe and remember to inform your local Unite Trust Representative or OPC member of any further concerns you may have.

In solidarity,

Debbie Wilkinson (Chair of Unite National Ambulance OPC)

19th May 2020