

# Special Protocol

(Effective through period of Commissioner's Order)

## **Administration of Immunizations by Paramedics and Advanced EMTs Pursuant to a Public Health Order of the Commissioner: COVID-19 VACCINE**

Vaccines for the novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2, are given by injection into the muscle (IM). Paramedics working in connection with a Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)-approved mobile integrated health (MIH) or community EMS program (CEMS), are already authorized by 105 CMR 700.003(A)(4) of the Drug Control Program (DCP) regulations, to administer certain vaccines. All other Paramedics are currently authorized by Commissioner's Order issued November 3, 2020, to administer influenza vaccine. Paramedics and Advanced EMTs are trained to administer certain medications intravenously, intramuscularly, subcutaneously, and intranasally. Paramedics and Advanced EMTs operate in accordance with the Department's EMS System regulations and Statewide Treatment Protocols of the MDPH Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), and in connection with an MDPH-licensed ambulance service. They also obtain authorization to practice from their ambulance services' affiliate hospital medical director.

The specific authorization granted by the latest Commissioner's Order, pursuant to the Department's DCP regulations, 105 CMR 700.004(H), authorizes currently certified Massachusetts Paramedics and Advanced EMTs working in connection with an ambulance service, as well as Paramedics working with an MIH or CEMS program, to administer vaccine for the prevention of COVID-19, in persons covered by a vaccine emergency use authorization (EUA), in accordance with this Special Protocol issued by OEMS. Prior to being deployed by their ambulance service to administer COVID-19 vaccine, such Paramedics and Advanced EMTs must have successfully completed a vaccination training program approved by their ambulance service's AHMD.

### **PARAMEDIC and ADVANCED EMT STANDING ORDERS**

- a. Provide patient, parent or legal representative with a copy of the Vaccine EUA Fact Sheet and answer any questions.
- b. Screen for contraindications according to accompanying Special Protocol Appendix A1, A2 or A3, depending on type of COVID-19 vaccine being administered, and/or the CDC/ACIP document (or ascertain the result of such screening)
- c. Always check the package insert or procedural instructions prior to administration of any vaccine. Follow insert or procedural instructions to prepare and draw up vaccine dose.
- d. Administer IM vaccines at a 90° angle with 22-25-gauge needle. The needle length for IM injections depends upon the age, gender, and/or weight of the vaccine recipient. (See Table attachment.). Administer IM, according to the recommended age-specific dose and schedule. (See Special Protocol Appendix A1, A2 or A3, depending on type of COVID-19 vaccine.)
- e. Administer vaccine.
- f. Observe patient for an allergic reaction for 15-20 minutes after administering vaccine. If an anaphylactic/allergic reaction occurs, treat according to Protocol 2.2A/2.2P Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis.
- g. Report clinically significant adverse events to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) at 1-800-822-7967 or <http://www.vaers.hhs.gov/>

Protocol Continues 

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## PARAMEDIC and ADVANCED EMT STANDING ORDERS

### **Implementation Criteria**

Paramedics and Advanced EMTs must be trained and authorized by their AHMD or designee prior to administering COVID-19 vaccine in any form. Under this protocol, Paramedics and Advanced EMTs can only administer vaccine while working for their ambulance service.

Such training must include at minimum the procedures to be followed by paramedics within the setting in which the vaccines are to be administered, for determining type and dose of vaccine to be given, including the identity of staff who will make such determination.

### Typical Needle Length and Injection Site for IM Injection

Gender and Weight	Needle Length	Injection Site	Injection Technique
Children (5-18 years)*	5/8" - 1"	Deltoid typically	Depends on Body Mass
Male and Female <60 kg (<130 lbs)	5/8"	Deltoid	Do not bunch subcutaneous and muscle tissue
Male and Female (130-152 lbs)	1"		
Female 70-90kg (152-200 lbs)	1"-1 1/2"		
Male 70kg-118kg (152-260 lbs)			
Female >90kg (200lbs)	1 1/2"		
Male >118kg (260 lbs)			

\*For patients under 16 years of age, needle size must be established based on specific training, direct supervision, or local site protocols.

For children (5–10 years), typically:

Deltoid muscle – use 5/8"–1" needle, 22–25 gauge

Anterolateral thigh muscle – use 1"–1 1/4" needle, 22–25 gauge

For preteens and teens (11–16 years), typically:

Deltoid muscle – use 5/8"–1" needle, 22–25 gauge