

NAME Position Statement re ME/C Personnel as First Responders 4-9-2020

Many state and local jurisdictions have designated specific first responders that are eligible for additional benefits (e.g., hazard duty pay) by virtue of their service and the risks it entails. Especially in the COVID-19 pandemic, first responders are at risk of exposure to the COVID-19 SARS virus when interacting with patients and the general public. Designated first responders may include emergency medical services, firefighters, law enforcement, and medical care providers.

Medical examiner, coroner and medicolegal death investigation personnel are also at risk of exposure during the pandemic when responding to death scenes, transporting and handling bodies, performing postmortem examinations, performing mortuary functions and maintenance, and handling and testing laboratory specimens.

The official position of the National Association of Medical Examiners is that if a locality or the Federal government designates first responders to be eligible for benefits specifically because of their duties that involve exposure to COVID-19 during the pandemic, that analogous medical examiner, coroner, and medicolegal death investigation personnel be likewise designated as first responders for that purpose.