



The Royal College of  
Emergency Medicine

**Safety Awareness**

April 2020

## COVID-19

# AIRWAY MANAGEMENT IN COVID PANDEMIC



**Airway management and ventilation can generate aerosols, putting staff at risk of exposure.**

### To minimise the risk:

- Use FULL PPE for airway management (Full gown, FFP3 mask, gloves & eye protection) <sup>[1]</sup>
- Mask ventilation carries the highest risk to rescuer - Use 2 person technique <sup>[2]</sup>
- To protect the rescuers, priority should be given to inserting a supraglottic airway (SGA) (*better*) or cuffed endotracheal tube (ETT) (*best*)
- Place an appropriate filter which incorporates viral filtration between the airway (SGA or ETT) and the ventilation device (self-inflating bag or anaesthetic circuit)
- Not all Heat & Moisture Exchange (HME) filters have **adequate viral filtration efficiency** *but could look similar*. Check product labelling to confirm

See Faculty of Intensive Care Medicine/Intensive Care Society/Association of Anaesthetist/Royal College of Anaesthetists guidelines: <https://icmanaesthesiacovid-19.org/covid-19-airway-management-principles>

With thanks to Dr Daniel Stephenson, Consultant at Rotherham Foundation Trust

<sup>[1]</sup> [PPE additional considerations](#)

<sup>[2]</sup> [European Resuscitation Council COVID-19 Guidelines](#)

**For Safety Alerts and RCEM issued Safety Flashes see:**

[www.rcem.ac.uk/SafetyAlerts](http://www.rcem.ac.uk/SafetyAlerts)