

27th March 2020

Association warns the public of the need for genuine caution during CoVid19 pandemic

While the number of cases of CoVid19 requiring hospital admission is steadily climbing, thankfully the healthcare system has yet to encounter the numbers of acutely unwell patients that risk overwhelming it. In order to avoid this situation arising, members of the public are very strongly reminded of the need to ensure regular hand washing, proper cough etiquette and maintaining the 2 metres social distancing requirement that the community should now be familiar with. These actions, which need to be taken by every member of the public, have the greatest chance of preventing a catastrophic surge in the numbers of patients who require acute hospital care and particularly critical care. "Flattening the curve" has been the goal of the public health response from the outset and the need to do this is even more important now than it ever has been.

Members of the Association who staff the country's Emergency Departments (EDs) have begun to see worrying developments which the public need to be aware of. With so many people unable to go to work, opportunities seemingly are being taken to carry out activities which pose a significant risk of injury and therefore the potential for the victim to require hospital treatment and potentially in-patient care at a time when the full capacity of the system needs to be available to fight the CoVid19 pandemic. This is not the time for people to be cleaning gutters, painting chimneys or engaging in other activities which risk a serious fall and significant injuries. Such injuries have an impact on the National Ambulance Service, EDs and potentially inpatient services and may cause an acute hospital bed to be required at this time when such resources are being dedicated to deal with CoVid19.

We have also seen a significant and worrying deterioration in road user behaviour. This results in entirely avoidable motor vehicle collisions which likewise both diverts scarce ambulance resources from necessary work and involves attendance at EDs where the focus should be (and will have to be) on treating acutely unwell patients with CoVid19 and other unavoidable medical emergencies. Sadly there have been 18 fatalities on our roads in recent weeks with many more injured. This spike in road-related deaths has prompted the Association to partner with the [Road Safety Authority](#) & [An Garda Síochána](#) to jointly ask members of the public to exercise particular caution at this time of major challenge.

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At this time of great risk to the public health of the residents of this country, it is important that scarce resources which will be required to fight CoVid19 and other medical emergencies are not diverted to deal with entirely preventable injuries. The Association asks everyone in Ireland to be very cognisant of the potential risks they are taking at a time when the healthcare system is going to be under such strain.



**Coronavirus
COVID-19**

Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

Help prevent coronavirus

- 
Wash your hands
- 
Cover mouth if coughing or sneezing
- 
Avoid touching your face
- 
Keep surfaces clean
- 
Stop shaking hands and hugging
- 
Keep a safe distance

The virus spreads in sneeze and cough droplets, so regularly taking the above measures helps reduce the chance of it spreading.

Visit HSE.ie
For updated factual information and advice
Or call 1850 24 1850

Protection from coronavirus.
It's in our hands.

  **Rialtas na hÉireann**
Government of Ireland