



TOWNSEND FIRE-EMS DEPARTMENT

Proudly serving the citizens of Townsend since 1875

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DIRECTIVE

To: All Personnel
From: Mark R. Boynton, Fire-EMS Chief
Subject: COVID19Update
Date: April 6, 2020

Please read entire document, information has been updated throughout.

Friday March 13th an SOG for highly infected patients was issued followed by a March 23rd Directive in Covid19. As the pandemic progresses we will continue to monitor the situation and recommendations from CDC, FEMA, MEMA, DPH. At this time the SOG issued continues to be the best practice. Please make sure you are familiar with this guideline and respond as indicated.

The key points- Updated - all medical calls the response and number of emergency responders shall be limited as much as possible. Proper protective equipment for routine medical calls shall be gloves and surgical mask. If COVID19 is suspected PPE shall be a surgical mask, double pair of gloves, safety glasses, Tyvek suit or gown. It is important to put a surgical mask on the patient as soon as possible if they will tolerate it. If the suspected COVID19 patient is in need of life saving measures such as nebulizer treatment, CPAP, intubation, CPR or rescue breathing all responders with patient contact shall wear a N95 mask. Nebulizer and CPAP must be discontinued prior to entering the emergency room. If proper protective clothing is utilized the risk of exposure is very low.

Supply's – Updated - We now have 75 Medical Grade N95 masks, 50 are in response vehicles and 25 are in supply. We also have 50 donated N95 construction grade face masks that can be used in place of surgical masks if we run out, 5 boxes of surgical masks (250), 200 gowns sizes 2x and 4x and plenty of gloves. Because we have no idea how long this pandemic will last and how long it will take to get supplies if N95 masks are used on a call do not dispose of them unless they were splashed with bodily fluids. After the call place them in a brown burger box located in supply room, write your name on it and it can be reused by the same person five times. This will be your assigned mask until it can be replaced. Same procedure will be used for surgical mask following DPH Comprehensive PPE Guidance dated April 5, 2020

Off Duty Exposure – No Change - Out of an abundance of caution if you have a family member living in your house that has been exposed and is quarantined you will not be allowed to work until

that family member test negative and is allowed to return to work. If the family member test positive you will not be allowed to return to active duty for 14 days after exposure.

If you are in close contact with friends, family members or personnel you work with at another place of employment and they becomes symptomatic you must inform Captain Scott or Captain Grimley as soon as possible and prior to reporting for duty or responding to any calls. To limit exposure other emergency responder and patients you will not be allowed to return to work and respond to any calls until you are cleared by Captain Scott or myself. If you become systematic do not respond to calls or shifts to work. Notify your PCP for guidance then notify Captain Scott or myself.

Confirmed Cases - Updated – As of today there have been **6** confirmed cases of COVID19 reported in Townsend with NO deaths.

Addresses for positive cases have been marked on the I Am Responding map with a stop sign symbol that says COVID 19. All personnel are to check IAR when responding to calls and wear the appropriate PPE when responding to these locations. Attwood Acres and Townsend Woods and other locations have also been marked in IAR with a Biohazard symbol because the individuals living at these locations are at high risk. All calls to these locations personnel shall wear a surgical mask to protect the residents. PPE supplies have been placed on all fire apparatus with the exception of the forestry vehicles.

All responses to suspected COVID19 patents shall be documented as an exposure or potential exposure. See attached “ADVISORY 03-02-2020” Again if crew members were properly protected the risk is low. Per Massachusetts Department of Public Health memorandum dated March 19th and CDC Guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html> those crew members can continue to work if it will affect staffing levels. However they shall be monitored for symptoms at the start of each shift and must wear a surgical mask while at work.

Unprotected exposure to individuals with COVID19 will follow CDC Guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html> placed on inactive status and self-quarantine for 14 days.

Inspections- No Changes – All annual inspections are on hold, all other inspections (oil burner, propane tank, smoke/CO etc) will continue as they are low risk and essential. The Governor has allowed home owners to defer 26F and 26F1/2 inspections for 90 days after the state of emergency is terminated if the buyer agrees to accept responsibility. If an owner or buyer calls indicating they will be deferring the inspection please record the name, date, address and contact information and forward it to Captain Grimley and myself so we can follow up. When conducting inspections please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Prior to the inspection, on the same day as the inspection call the occupant or relator and ask if anyone in the house is sick or has been sick? If the answer is yes the inspection shall be rescheduled 21 days in the future. The occupant/relator shall be directed to the Governors order allowing deferral of inspection as an option.

- Personnel may wear and surgical mask while performing inspections, keep 6 feet away from all other people and limit the time in the dwelling.

Staffing – No Change – Current staffing levels are sufficient with very few open shifts. We do have three personnel in quarantine opening up a few shifts. We also have four personnel that are on leave of absence for various reasons. We are concerned this could be a sign of staffing shortages in the near future. For this reason would like to remind paid-on-call personnel to let Captain Grimley know if you are available to work during this unprecedented time. We will continue to follow our staffing policy as long as possible. Knowing additional staff are available to maintain a fire response and drive EMS apparatus will be helpful moving forward. We are also working on an emergency staffing plan to include worst case scenario.

Health Screening – Updated – At the beginning and end of each shift personnel shall screen each other for signs of COVID19 by taking each other's temperature and record any signs or symptoms. This means personnel working 10 hour shift will be screened twice. Personnel working a 24 will be screened 3 times etc. The information shall be recorded in the log book located in the kitchen. Anyone with a temperature greater than 100.4 shall notify Captain Grimley or Captain Scott and you will not be allowed to work.

Effective immediately anyone including call members entering the secured area of a Townsend Fire-EMS station shall be screened. Log books and information books have been placed at the Harbor and West Stations. Understandably we do not expect you to screen prior to responding to a call. You must be screened after a call. ALL MEMBERS are encouraged to conduct self-screenings at home twice daily and to contact Captain Scott or myself if you become symptomatic.

COVID19 Testing – No Change – CVS Pharmacy 720 Boston Turnpike in Shrewsbury MA has been set up as a drive through test site for first responders with symptoms and civilians with symptoms. They are currently testing from 8am to 8pm seven days a week by appointment only.

Training/Meetings – No Change – All department meetings and training are canceled until further notice. Training and policies related to the COVID19 Pandemic is available on Fire Rescue 1 Academy. <https://olt.firerescue1academy.com/login/#login>

Officers are now meeting weekly online Tuesday nights at 6pm to stay up-to-date on current events and changes.

On Duty Personnel at the start of each shift shall review the latest COVID19 information located in the "COVID19 Information and Reference Material" binder also located in the kitchen at the central fire station. Once the material have been reviewed the training log shall be dated and signed.

On-call-personnel are encouraged to stop by the central station to review the information or it can be viewed and acknowledged as being viewed on Fire Rescue 1 Academy. A ton of information is also available in the members only section of the Fire-EMS website. (Approximately documents)

All personnel shall watch the attached PPE donning and doffing video as soon and possible. This maybe done on Fire Rescue 1. On duty personnel can clicking the link below and complete a training sheet and submitting it to Captain Scott.

<https://utmb.ensemblevideo.com/hapi/v1/contents/permalinks/Nk9n7Q6H/view>

All personnel please take note, this document is a directive and shall be followed by all personnel. Failure to abide by this directive will result in disciplinary action.

This is a dynamic situation that is changing rapidly. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to Captain Scott or myself, we will do our best to keep you updated with the latest information and any changes to our operations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - Updated

US Fire administration and Mass Fire Marshal's office has established a special study code in fire reporting. On the basic page of fire report there is not two fields that must be completed to record COVID19 related calls.

OEMS Protocol changes to discourage transport of healthy patients between the ages of 18-55. Please read and review the protocol for further details.

Some of you may have loved ones at home that are elderly or have underlying conditions that put them at risk. I understand you may be concerned they could be exposed to COVID19 as a result of you being on the front lines responding to calls. For this reason we have secured and furnished a 3 bedroom townhouse apartment on Spaulding Street. Fire-EMS personnel seeking shelter away from family are encouraged to contact me to make arrangements to stay at this location. TFD is working on setting up a second location for sick or quarantine personnel.

Mutual aid and cover assignments – we will do our best to keep you informed. Currently our border towns have no restrictions, it is business as usual. If we go outside our border towns its likely you will be required to remain outside the station with the vehicle and only allowed to enter to use the restrooms.

Until further notice no visitors will be allowed at any of the Fire-EMS Fire stations. This includes friends and family members working nights or weekends.

In the event an ambulance strike team is requested for an out of town response related to COVID19 contact the duty officer for guidance. If we can fulfill the request we will with one ambulance and two personnel only.