

BARKHAMSTED FIRE DISTRICT

Emergency Directive: COVID-19

Date: March 15, 2020

To: All Barkhamsted Fire District (BFD) personnel

From: Richard Winn, President BFD, Chiefs: Steve Elovirta, Jim Shanley and Larry Gillen

Re. COVID-19 Special Operating Procedures

Effective immediately the following special procedures are to be followed regarding station access, station cleaning and emergency response until further notice for the employees and staff of the BFD which does includes all the members of the: Barkhamsted East, Pleasant Valley and Riverton fire departments. These procedures are recommended best practices to minimize exposure of BFD staff to COVID-19.

Station Access Restrictions

1. All non-essential staff and visitors including family members shall not be allowed in the stations until further notice. An exception to this would be another fire department providing station coverage or an emergency situation authorized by the Chief.
2. Any vendor or contractor must call ahead and make an appointment with the daytime driver or the Chief. The vendor or contractor will be restricted to the entryway, or area of work.
3. Member sponsored social events, station tours and meetings are suspended.
4. Outside organizations are suspended from using the station for any reason.

Cleaning and Housekeeping

1. Following emergency calls BFD staff should minimize congregation in the station and avoid all but essential areas of the firehouse. Areas of the station occupied by BFD staff are to be thoroughly decontaminated following use. This includes the bathrooms, desks, counters, door handles and chairs. Use a bleach solution and disposable towels to decontaminate.
2. After every call the seats and hard surfaces inside apparatus are to be decontaminated using a bleach solution and disposable towels.

Emergency Response

1. Every BFD apparatus responding to an emergency should if at all possible have at least 1 BFD staff member who has a current license at the EMR level or higher. Staffing on apparatus should be minimized and reduced if the nature of the call permits.

2. No BFD staff shall respond to the scene of any incident in their own vehicles with the exception of officers. Officers who elect to respond to scenes shall have, if possible, the additional PPE described below and shall utilize it in a similar manner.
3. Fire Police may respond to an emergency scene only if they are conducting traffic duties not in the immediate scene area and should not attempt to make patient contact.
4. For medical (EMS assist) calls involving patient contact, such as lift assists, manpower, CPR etc. BFD staff shall follow these procedures:
 - a. In most situations, EMS staff will have determined if the patient is COVID-19 positive or suspect and will communicate this to BEFD staff. LCD is also screening callers and may have additional information available by landline.
 - b. Avoid close contact with patients exhibiting the symptoms of COVID-19 to the fullest extent possible. Do not approach any closer than 6 ft. without PPE.
 - c. Follow the recommendations of EMS staff on scene with respect to identifying patients potentially infected with COVID-19 and minimizing patient contact.
 - d. If close contact with a patient known or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 is necessary then all participating BFD staff shall don full PPE to include respirator mask or SCBA, gloves and protective clothing prior to being closer than 6 ft. from the patient.
 - e. The number of staff should be minimized to the extent necessary to affect the rescue.
 - f. Following patient care all PPE shall be properly doffed as described below.
5. For all fire or rescue calls including motor vehicle accidents BFD staff shall follow these procedures:
 - a. BFD staff shall don full structural PPE prior to responding to all calls. They shall, if possible, have a N-95 mask and medical gloves ready.
 - b. On arrival, the Officer and if available, one medically trained staff shall exit the apparatus and do a scene size up and rapid patient assessment. All other staff shall remain in the apparatus until directed by that person(s).
 - c. The medically trained BFD staff and/or the officer shall communicate and screen all conscious patients involved to the extent possible with the following questions:
 - i. Are you infected with COVID-19 (coronavirus)?
 - ii. Do you have a fever or respiratory symptoms, a cough, or difficulty breathing?
 - iii. Have you traveled outside the United States in the past 14 days?
 - d. If any of the answers are YES, then that person is to be considered COVID-19 positive and handled as described in Section 5 below. If all the questions are answered NO, then the medically trained BFD staff and/or the officer shall do a quick assessment to make their own observations and to find other injuries.
 - e. The assessment results shall be communicated to responding EMS personnel verbally as soon as possible.
 - f. If a patient is found unconscious or in critical condition, they should be assumed positive and handled as described in Section 5 below.
 - g. Remaining BFD staff on apparatus shall be utilized for other duties and shall not get closer than 6 ft. from any patients unless instructed to do so by the medically trained BFD staff and/or the officer.
 - h. If an extrication is needed, it shall only be done by staff properly protected with full PPE, eye protection, extrication/firefighting gloves with nitrile inner gloves, and N-95 mask or SCBA.

6. COVID-19 positive patients shall be, if possible, handled as follows by BFD staff:
 - a. Hand a surgical or N-95 mask to the conscious patient and ask them to don.
 - b. Place a surgical or N-95 mask on the unconscious patient.
 - c. Separate the COVID positive patients from other patients and BFD staff.
 - d. Do not allow them to enter BFD apparatus.
 - e. Assess for injuries and begin treatment of critical injuries.
 - f. Turn over all patients to EMS staff as soon as possible.
7. PPE doffing by BFD staff shall follow the following procedures at the scene of the incident before entering BFD apparatus or their own vehicles:
 - a. The outer layer of clothing should be removed first, placed in garbage bags and sealed with wire ties. Gloves and masks should be doffed next and placed in biohazard or garbage bags.
 - b. Thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water, or hand sanitizer.
 - c. All clothing bagged on scene is to be immediately laundered. All one-time items are to be disposed of in an approved manner in sealed garbage bags.
8. Any equipment or apparatus interiors potentially contaminated by bodily fluids or aerosols from a patient shall be decontaminated using a bleach solution and allowed to air dry before handling. Staff doing decontamination shall be in full PPE including N-95 masks or SCBA.
9. Run documentation shall include details in the narrative related to the special precautions taken and any potential exposures. The names and contact information for all patients involved shall be collected at the scene and recorded in the run documentation.
10. BFD staff who develop any of the below symptoms or who have been in contact with confirmed positive COVID-19 patients shall notify their Chief immediately, stop responding to incidents, and remain isolated from other BFD staff until released by a physician.
 - a. Sudden onset of fever, weakness, muscle pains, vomiting or diarrhea, coughing, difficulty breathing.
11. BFD staff who feel that they are at an increased risk for exposure, infection and/or medical complications from COVID-19 or who do not wish to risk exposure for any other reason shall inform their Chief of their desire to discontinue emergency responses until they considered that the risk for themselves is now acceptable. Staff who opt-out shall not return to their firehouse and emergency responses until reviewing their situation with their Chief.