

**TOWN OF WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT  
STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**SECTION: Alarms and Response Guidelines  
SUBJECT: Responses during the COVID-19 Pandemic  
REVISED: 03/22/2020**

**PURPOSE:**

To establish supplemental Fire Department policy and procedures for responses during the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic for infection control and force protection.

**POLICY:**

- A. These policies and procedures shall be strictly followed by all members. When in doubt, members shall follow the strictest procedures to ensure their safety and welfare and the safety and welfare of their fellow Fire Department members.
- B. No member shall respond to any call in their Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) except Chief Officers. Members shall respond on Fire Department apparatus only.
- C. It is imperative that all members practice safeguards to limit and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 infection. These include frequent washing of hands with soap and water, practicing Social Distancing (keeping six feet apart from other people), and regularly sanitizing frequently touched surfaces
- D. If any member has been exposed or suspected of exposure to COVID-19 during their personal life and/or regular job activities they shall inform a Chief Officer and isolate/quarantine themselves as required. They shall inform the Chief Officer if they have had any contact with other Fire Department personnel after their exposure or possible exposure.
- E. The following procedures shall be followed for First Responder/Medical calls :
  - 1. Only Fire Department apparatus equipped with SCBA and appropriately certified personnel (as both medical and firefighter) wearing appropriate PPE (full turn-out gear) shall respond to any EMS/First Responder calls.
  - 2. To limit exposure, no more than 2 personnel shall enter the scene and make contact with patients unless additional members are absolutely required as deemed necessary by the senior medical person present.
  - 3. As a minimum, those members coming in contact with patients shall wear N95 masks and nitrile gloves. Higher levels of PPE to include use of SCBA may be required if it is determined the patient has been exposed to or is infected with COVID-19.
  - 4. An N95 mask (or oxygen mask if required) shall be placed on patients to prevent spread of possible infections.
  - 5. After patient treatment on scene, members involved shall perform hasty decontamination of themselves and all equipment involved before getting back on apparatus and departing the scene. This may include removing and bagging turn-out gear and other equipment until complete decontamination can occur.

5. If possible exposure to COVID-19 is suspected, the members and apparatus involved with return to TWFD Station #2 for further decontamination and isolation/quarantine as necessary.
- F. The following procedures shall be followed for Fire Alarms, Investigations and other fire calls where the presence of active fire or other hazardous conditions has not been confirmed or substantiated by the other indicators (e.g. smoke, fire, odors, illness, multiple calls, etc.):
1. To limit exposure, especially at high occupancy facilities (apartment complexes, big box store, malls, etc.) no more than 2 personnel shall enter the scene to investigate unless additional members are absolutely required as deemed necessary by the senior officer present.
  2. As a minimum, those members entering the scene shall wear N95 masks and nitrile gloves along with their normal PPE (full turnout gear and SCBA ready to use). As the situation develops, higher levels of PPE to include use of SCBA may be required.
  4. After resolution of the incident on scene, members involved shall perform hasty decontamination of themselves and all equipment involved before getting back on apparatus and departing the scene. This may include removing and bagging turn-out gear and other equipment until complete decontamination can occur.
  5. If possible exposure to COVID-19 is suspected, the members and apparatus involved with return to TWFD Station #2 for further decontamination and isolation/quarantine as necessary.
- G. Any time possible exposure to COVID-19 occurs or is suspected during a call, a Chief officer will be immediately informed to ensure additional Fire Department resources are activated to perform additional decontamination and services for the exposed members as necessary.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

- A. All fire department members are responsible to strictly follow these policies and procedures to ensure are followed for all responses during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- B. It is also the members' responsibility to immediately report any violations of these policies to the Department Officers.
- C. These policies and procedures will remain in effect until otherwise changed by the Department Chief.