

Alameda Fire Department Response to COVID-19

In early January, the Alameda Fire Department (AFD), in potential response to COVID-19 becoming a threat to the health and safety of our community, began increasing the level of training to all personnel in conjunction with the most up to date guidelines and standards from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Alameda County Department of Public Health (ALCOPH). All AFD personnel have received advanced training and provided additional levels of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This ensures our personnel are protected but also enhances the protection for all community members.

Additionally, the AFD has increased the deliveries of PPE to ensure we have the needed supplies moving forward if COVID-19 continues to impact Alameda. Unfortunately, one of our Members was diagnosed with COVID-19 on March 10, and is currently being quarantined at home. Once this occurred, the Station location, Fire Engine and Ambulance were thoroughly cleaned by an outside vendor and all requested precautions through the CDC and ALCOPH were implemented. ALCOPH was notified on this communicable exposure and was provided with the names of all other crew members, patients, and all other persons known to be in contact with the ill Member. ALCOPH is currently investigating each of these encounters and will be in contact with those individuals for any follow-up care or additional actions if needed.

The AFD is in daily contact with this Member and is following all directions received through mandate by the ALCOPH.

Beginning at 8:00 AM on February 27, the AFD's emergency dispatch center, ACRECC, implemented a new set of questions for patients that have flu like signs and symptoms and may have traveled recently to known areas impacted with COVID-19. These questions are designed to provide a higher level of safety for the public and to alert responding personnel of potential exposures. If confirmation of this additional information is received at ACRECC, this information is displayed on the Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) of the responding fire companies so that additional PPE is donned prior to the firefighter's arrival on scene.

Dependent on the type and nature of a medical emergency, Firefighter personnel will always wear gloves on each medical emergency response but are instructed to use other forms of PPE such as a gown, face mask and/or eye protection dependent on the potential level of risk to them and with safety to a patient as their primary concerns on scene. The AFD is closely monitoring all weekly updated COVID-19 information through the CDC and ALCOPH and modifying our response, training and equipment to ensure the highest and most up to date safety procedures are in place for Alameda.

Lastly, the City of Alameda has placed the below proactive steps and best practices in our press releases and on the City website. Please follow these guidelines as they are the best assurance of preventing the spread of COVID-19 and partnering with the AFD in keeping our residents, business owners and visitors safe in the great City of Alameda.

PROACTIVE STEPS

The City of Alameda has taken proactive steps to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We have posters and hand sanitizer available at all our facilities. We created a webpage and fact sheet with up-to-date information at www.alamedaca.gov/alerts. We have taken many steps to increase sanitation including deploying 17 hand sanitizer stations throughout the City. We are following recommendations by the Alameda County Public Health Department regarding cancelling mass events. And we are working with Alameda County to make sure sanitization is a top priority in areas where people who are unhoused reside.

PREVENT THE SPREAD

People over 60 and people with underlying health conditions are at a much higher risk of severe illness. The County recommends those at high risk stay home and away from crowded social gatherings as much as possible. According to the Alameda County Department of Public Health, most individuals who test positive for COVID-19 have mild symptoms. To help ensure those with health risks have access to the treatment they need, the general public should take action now to prevent an overwhelmed health care system.

The best thing we can do to protect ourselves and our community, especially those who are more vulnerable, is follow recommended precautions, including:

- Washing hands with soap and water
- Covering your cough or sneeze
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Staying away from work, school, or other people if you become sick
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick

In partnership with the City of Alameda, the AFD stands ready to secure your continued safety during this difficult period facing our Community.

Sincerely,

Edmond A. Rodriguez
Fire Chief