



NC DEPARTMENT OF
INSURANCE
OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORADUM

TO: North Carolina Fire Service

FROM: William C. Ray, Director, *North Carolina Emergency Management* ^{WR}
 Brian Taylor, Chief State Fire Marshal, *North Carolina Office of State Marshal* ^{BT}

DATE: August 11, 2021

RE: Fire Service preparations for COVID

As seen in medical surveillance data, COVID trends are rising once again. The North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal and North Carolina Emergency Management are becoming increasingly aware of impacts to local public safety entities from COVID infections and quarantines. It is realized that staffing a fire department in the midst of a pandemic is no easy task. The State Emergency Response Team would like to offer the following suggestions as we enter into and navigate through this wave of increased COVID infections.

1. Please continue to urge your personnel to get vaccinated.
 - a. It's important to share factual information regarding vaccines from reputable sources.
 - b. Vaccinated persons can still be infected and transmit the virus, though the vaccinated person's risk of serious illness is reduced greatly.
2. Consider mask use for all personnel when
 - a. Greater than 6ft of space cannot be achieved.
 - b. When riding in fire apparatus with 2 or more persons.
 - c. On incidents, especially on EMS calls.
 - d. During gatherings, meetings, and training courses.
3. Review your Continuity of Operations Plans. How does your agency intend to continue providing fire services to your district and community if staffing and personnel are reduced?
 - a. Discuss contingency plans with your mutual aid partners.
 - b. Conduct an internal analysis of critical roles, tasks, and staffing levels. How can those areas be continued in the face of reduced staffing? Is there more than one person that can do a certain task?
4. If your agency has any issues with providing basic services due to COVID, and your agency's needs cannot be met through local mutual aid avenues, please contact the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal for assistance from the State Emergency Response Team.
5. Remember the Three W's: **Wear a mask, Wait 6 feet apart, and Wash your hands.**

The North Carolina State Emergency Response Team stands ready to assist the North Carolina Fire Service with any staffing or other concerns in light of the surge of COVID cases.