

March 29,2020

Dear Council members:

As the COVID-19 Pandemic is spreading farther and faster than many may have thought, I would like to thank all of our Member Squads, and also those who are not Members, for continuing to function and provide very important pre-hospital care to our communities. Our services are desperately needed, perhaps more than ever in many of our lifetimes, and you are filling an important need. We know that some may be concerned about responding to potential COVID-19 patients or to a home where a COVID-19 patient is being isolated, and we understand this reluctance and fear. If you are in one of the CDC identified susceptible populations, including older persons or those with pre-existing medical conditions, you may consider placing yourself in a more administrative or support position to limit exposure. We trust your judgement and decisions and thank you for whatever service you are able to provide.

We know some supplies may be running low and we recommend that you stay in contact with your local Emergency Manager, your local OEM Manager/Coordinator and your county EMS Coordinator to keep them updated on your PPE needs - they may be able to assist you with providing masks, gloves, cleaning & disinfecting supplies. The public is appreciative of the work done by emergency response personnel, and we are equally appreciative of the support our communities are showing us.

Please remember to rely on information from reputable sources. Some erroneous information has been circulated and it is important to distinguish between fact and myth. Here are some reminders and resources to keep yourself, your crew members, and your families safe:

1. Review the NJ State COVID-19 website: <https://covid19.nj.gov/>
2. Stay in close contact with your local OEM Coordinator for your coverage area, your County EMS Coordinator and your local Emergency Manager/Management Team.
3. Follow guidelines for appropriate PPE precautions.
4. Pre-plan for potential extended duty shifts.
5. Make sure you monitor your Members' activities both while responding to calls, while on-duty and while off-duty to ensure they are taking appropriate steps to decontaminate after possible COVID-19 exposures, and that their mental fitness remains healthy. Do not be afraid to contact your appropriate CISD team if needed, and be aware of the need for physical AND mental rehab as needed. You should have plans set up to be used if needed.
6. Continue to monitor ongoing events in your service area and update procedures as needed.
7. Additional online resources include:
 - CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
 - OEMS website: www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml
 - EMS Council website: www.NJSFAC.org

- MD1program Youtube Channel:
www.youtube.com/channel/UC93VE2Sr9AC3sMCN0W7uLQA
- U.S. Government COVID-19 Response Plan Google Drive link:
[HHS_Covid_Plan.pdf](#)

In addition, please contact our Emergency Preparedness Chair, Frank Goodstein, or me with additional concerns you may have.

We need to work together as part of the response teams needed in this time of crisis. We can all help each other out. As stated earlier, some members may not be able to serve in a response role at this time, but they may be able to help in other ways such as restocking supplies making food runs for duty crews, assisting with documentation, etc.

REMEMBER -

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds!
2. Cover all coughs and sneezes, and wash your hands immediately.
3. Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
4. Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
5. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
6. Avoid close contact with people - practice social distancing to slow the spread of COVID-19.
7. If you feel sick, STAY HOME! Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, sore throat and difficulty breathing.
 - If your symptoms are mild, call your personal physician - do NOT go to the office without calling.
 - If your symptoms are severe go to the Emergency Room - call ahead if not going in by ambulance.

At this time, planning for future activities is difficult. It is unclear when requirements for social distancing and the closure of non-essential facilities will end. Because of this the host district has decided to cancel our Midyear meeting which was scheduled for May 17. The Executive Board will be discussing the possibility of holding this event at a later date. The status of upcoming Board of Trustees meetings will also be discussed with remote options being evaluated. In the meantime, please remain in contact with your District and State officers who will continue to act as conduits for information.

Above all, STAY SAFE!!!

Barbara Platt
President, EMS Council of New Jersey