

EDGEWATER FIRE DEPARTMENT
Standard Operating Guidelines



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Purpose: Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus the following procedures are being implemented by the Edgewater Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) to protect our members, while still providing public safety services. This policy has been developed in conjunction with guidance from federal and state authorities and the center for disease control and prevention. This policy is effective immediately and shall be adhered to by all members until no longer deemed necessary by the powers that be. It shall also be understood that this is a constantly evolving situation and that these procedures can be adjusted at any point to reflect new or prudent information. Of paramount concern is the safety of our members and mitigating the spread of this virus.

Scope:

1. All Chiefs, Line Officers & Members of the Edgewater Volunteer Fire Department acting in the role of Incident Command during an emergency incident.
2. All firefighters and emergency personal operating at the scene of an emergency incident.
3. Edgewater Police Department Telecommunication Center & the respective dispatch personal.

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Preventative Measures:

Effective immediately all department meetings, training, and other “social gatherings” are cancelled. Members are not permitted to be at any firehouses for any other purpose than calls for service. While at the firehouse during calls for service, members are reminded to maintain distance (6’) from each other. Edgewater Fire Prevention will still be able to operate in their offices as needed. If members need to do truck checks, they will notify an officer before entering the fire station and exit upon completion of the check. The Fire chief will be notified by the Officer.

Before, during, and after calls members are reminded to implement good sanitary practices. The following practices are recommended:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing or using the restroom.
- Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people, putting a distance of at least six feet between yourself and other people.
- Avoid public places or gatherings.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow, and discard of tissue in garbage
- Do not shake hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces routinely.
- If you are at higher risk because of your age (60+) or because you have a serious medical condition (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, respiratory disease) attempt to isolate yourself.

Response Guidelines:

It is the goal of the EVFD to limit and avoid exposure of its personnel to COVID-19. Following best practices outlined by the Center for Disease Control and other governmental agencies, personnel should adhere to the following procedures. Dispatch shall screen calls to attempt to identify situations where a caller is potentially infectious. Fire officers will also conduct on-scene questions of occupants to elicit pertinent information pertaining to their health and the nature of the call. The goal is to identify any potential sick individuals, protect fire department members, and rectify the emergency call. The following are questions that will be addressed to the occupants.

1. Is anyone in the residence, location, or establishment self-quarantined or self-monitoring for Coronavirus within the past 14 days?
2. Has anyone in the residence, location, or establishment had a possible exposure to Coronavirus within the past 14 days?
3. Is anyone in the residence, location, or establishment sick with respiratory illness, cough, fever, chills, body aches, congestion, or experiencing shortness of breath?
4. Has anyone traveled within the past 14 days?

Should the occupant, resident, or individual answer yes to any of the above questions members shall take all necessary precautions to protect themselves. Additionally, dispatch shall be notified of the situation. Protective precautions will include the following.

- Don full PPE including the use of self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), going “on air”.
- Use of nitrile gloves, unless the emergency requires structural firefighting gloves.

Should they answer no to the aforementioned questions the member(s) do not need to go “on air”. Nitrile gloves will still be used to afford the member extra protection. After each use gloves will be removed and disposed of properly.

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The following practices will be implemented to reduce exposure and protect personnel at ALL incidents.

- When feasible and depending on the nature of the emergency call only a Chief or Line officer & one engine will respond with only (4) Firefighters. Driver, Officer & two firefighters to try to comply with the recommended Distance Policy of six (6) feet. **Only two firefighters will enter the building from the engine when needed.**
- Occupants will always be asked politely to maintain distance or evacuate the premises before fire department personnel enter.
- Whenever possible only 2 members will be committed to entering the premises to perform an investigation or mitigate an issue.
- Members will be mindful of limiting their contact with anything while operating inside the structure.
- The appropriate PPE must be worn.
- Members from the department who are at a higher risk for becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 should refrain from responding on fire calls.

Exposure Protocols:

In situations where the fire department is operating at a location or on a scene with known or potentially infectious individuals the following procedures will be conducted to maintain personnel safety and document the incident.

1. Dispatch will be notified.
2. Notify the appropriate chain of command.
3. Names of the members operating at the incident will be noted on the fire department incident report.
4. Personnel exposure forms will be completed.
5. Decontamination of PPE, face piece and regulator will be performed.
6. If symptoms develop they should self-isolate and notify a medical professional and Patty Dalton the public Health Nurse to arrange for appropriate evaluation and care. The fire chief must also be notified.

Decontamination and PPE:

The department has procured additional gloves that have been placed on each front line apparatus. A sanitizing solution is Located at fire headquarters be utilized by members to sanitize their equipment properly following a potential exposure. Below is a guideline on cleaning SCBA after each use:

Make a solution of 1L of water to 1mL of laundry bleach and do not exceed 110 degrees Fahrenheit. This solution should be applied with a spray bottle or paper towel to wipe and rinse the regulator, but do not submerge in the solution. Let the regulator air-dry. You can clean the SCBA harness and frame with warm soapy water containing some of the laundry bleach solution. Also air-dry the SCBA harness and frame. A Sanitary solution can also be used to wipe down the regulator and face piece to disinfect it.

Visit [EPA Guidelines](#) to find the current list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19.

Maintaining Operational Readiness:

Any member that feels ill or has been potentially exposed to COVID-19 outside of the fire department and firehouse will immediately notify the Fire Chief and cease responding on fire calls. In the event that adequate staffing and response to fire calls becomes a concern because of illness or caring for sick family members, drastic measures may be considered or implemented by the Fire Chief. At all times the safety of the members and the public that we serve remains a priority. If necessary, the Chief can and will implement a duty crew in quarters to ensure adequate staffing and response times.

Additional Information:

Any member with questions or concerns can contact a fire officer or the department training officer for clarification. Any member seeking further training on the use of PPE, including medical gloves shall contact the **Training Officer**. Members should stay abreast of the current situation and follow guidance from the CDC at the following [link](#).