



Union Fire Company No.1

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COVID-19 CONTINUITY OF OPERATION PLAN *March 12, 2020*

PURPOSE

The purpose of *The Union Fire Company No. 1 COVID-19 Continuity of Operations Plan* is to establish contingencies and protective measures for ensuring the continuity of the core functions of the Union Fire Company No. 1, during an active or anticipated outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Union Fire Company personnel are currently operating 24/7/365 to facilitate safe and effective response to Fire and EMS emergencies occurring in Oxford Borough, East Nottingham Twp., West Nottingham Twp., Upper Oxford Twp., Lower Oxford Twp., Elk Twp., and Colerain Twp., along with mutual aid jurisdictions.

SCOPE

The Union Fire Company No. 1 COVID-19 Continuity of Operations Plan addresses potential incident's that significantly affects the ability of employees and volunteers of the Union Fire Company No. 1 and the Union Fire Company No. 1. Ambulance Division to respond to Emergency Incidents.

SITUATION

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that was first detected in China and which has now been detected in over 70 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus, initially believed to have spread from animals to humans, expanded from its epicenter in Wuhan, Hubei Province China. Widespread transmission of COVID-19 would translate into large portions of the Union Fire Company personnel experiencing symptoms at the same time. Schools, childcare centers, workplaces, and other places for mass gatherings will experience equal or greater absenteeism. Public health and healthcare systems may become overloaded with elevated rates of hospitalizations and deaths. Other critical infrastructure, such as law enforcement, emergency medical services, and transportation industry may also be affected. Health care providers and hospitals may be overwhelmed. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

1. COVID-19 will spread to the Oxford area and pre-infection warning time will likely be limited.
2. Widespread transmission of COVID-19 will translate into large portions of the Union Fire Company personnel experiencing symptoms at the same time.
3. Personnel should take action to reduce their chance of exposure to COVID-19.
4. This plan will be activated by Fire Chief (or designee) upon recognition of the potential for staffing shortages as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

PUBLIC REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

It is the role of the fire chief, president, or their designees to provide information to the public, to municipal or other governmental officials, and/or to the press. Any calls or inquiries to this plan shall be directed to the Fire Chief and President.

PLAN ACTIVATION

The Union Fire Company No. 1 COVID-19 Continuity of Operations Plan may be activated or modified only by the Chief of the Union Fire Company (or designee), upon recognition of a situation that directly threatens the health of the personnel of the Union Fire Company and abilities to continue providing core functions to the residents and visitors to the greater Oxford area. Plan activation shall be communicated via all means necessary to all Union Fire Company personnel. All protective measures included in this plan should be coordinated with the efforts of the Chester County Health Department to ensure their effectiveness against the spread of COVID-19 within Union Fire Company personnel and the general public.

LEVEL 4

Daily Operations involves the normal, everyday function of the Union Fire Company. During the COVID-19 outbreak, special precautions should be taken during a Level 4 activation to ensure personal hygiene, and prevent the spread of the disease to Union Fire Company personnel and stakeholders.

- **Illness** - Personnel who have any one or more symptom of acute respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath) are to stay home and not come to work or respond to calls until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24-hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). EMS Employees will notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
- **Direct Contact** - Personnel who have had direct contact with a person who became ill within 14 days of returning from China, Iran, Italy, South Korea, or Japan, OR had contact with an individual who is a presumptive/confirmed case of coronavirus are required to stay home and monitor their health for 14 days from the time of contact.
- **Travel** - Personnel who travel to an affected area (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map>) will be required to self-quarantine for 14-days after their travel ends.
- **Family** - Personnel who live with someone who may have been exposed to COVID-19, traveled to an affected area, or is showing symptoms of acute respiratory illness should stay home for 14 days after the exposure, travel, or symptoms have ended.

- **Social Distancing** - This refers to avoiding areas where large groups of people share common spaces, and is regarded as an effective means of prevention. This includes limiting exposure to local public transportation and any areas where people are in close proximity with each other (within 3-6 feet). Social distancing is a strongly encouraged practice by the Union Fire Company whether it applies to personal or professional activities. It includes any unnecessary travel, meetings, volunteering at community functions, utilizing public gyms and social events or gatherings that can be rescheduled.
First responders are also asked to consider the inherent risk of other on-duty positions at other locations and. Further, the Union Fire Company strongly recommends employees in every division, reduce their risk of exposure by limiting contact with potential sources of contamination that come from outside sources like food or vendor deliveries.
- **Outside Meetings** - Personnel should teleconference or send a proxy to attend meetings whenever possible, especially if there are multiple representatives from the Union Fire Company attending the same meeting.
- **Handwashing** - Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and those around you from getting sick. Wash your hands often, particularly before, during, and after mealtimes and caring for someone who is sick, after using the toilet, after blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing, and after touching doorknobs, light switches, and other communal surfaces.

Effective handwashing utilizes the following steps:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

- **Surface Disinfection** - Given the shared-use of space and equipment at the Union Fire Company and an environment where COVID-19 is potentially within our population, contamination will be unavoidable. However, measures should be put into place to mitigate the amount of potential germs in work areas and limit the exposure to well personnel. This includes routine and frequent disinfecting of all shared services to include, Phones, Desks, Keyboards/Mice, Door Handle, Light Switches, Writing Instruments, File Cabinets, Printers, etc....

At the end of EMS shifts, Shift leaders should coordinate with personnel to ensure the thorough cleaning and disinfection of all work areas to minimize the exposure of employees to contaminants.

LEVEL 3

Health reports indicate that the area is likely to see cases of COVID-19 in the immediate future, however there are no known cases in the district. Operations of the Union Fire Company are modified to limit potential exposure to the Fire Company Personnel.

Level 3 includes all of the standards identified in level 4, in addition to the following. In all cases the more stringent standard applies.

- **EMS Operations** – Ambulance calls will be run with one unit only, unless a second unit is requested. A 2nd EMS Unit shall not be utilized on presumptive COVID-19 patients. EMS units shall only be staffed with a Driver and Provider.

EMS Crews will be advised on company policy with respect to PPE and protective measures. These are mandatory for all EMS personnel and will follow Dept. of Health guidelines in all cases, especially those with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or COVID-19 exposure. Fire personnel involved in patient care will be in PPE as directed by the lead EMS provider.

Fire Department personnel responding to Cardiac Arrest and Assist the Ambulance Calls shall stage outside the structure or area and contact the EMS crew via radio for instructions. Fire Department personnel shall not respond directly to the scene.

Ambulance ride along and interns will no longer be permitted.

- **Fire Operations** – The OIC will query patients/homeowners on recent illness and exposure potential prior to entering any home or facility, responses to the query will be utilized in the development of the Incident Action Plan.

The OIC will limit the number of personnel interior or with patient contact to the absolute minimum. All responding units with the exception of the first arriving piece shall stage with their apparatus until directed otherwise by the OIC. Crews shall not intermingle while staged. The OIC will utilize a separate staging area for mutual aid units whenever possible. Non-critical units will be released as quickly as possible.

All mutual aid responses shall be limited to the unit requested in dispatch; NO additional units shall respond. At no time should apparatus “self-attach” to a incident outside the Union Fire Company response area.

Personnel will thoroughly clean the apparatus seating area, SCBA and all gear utilized immediately upon return to the station. SCBA masks will be cleaned twice to ensure thorough sanitation.

Members will indicate their status as “available” or “unavailable” on I am Responding (IaR). Members shall utilize IaR indicating their response status for all incidents.

- **Station Operations** – In order to maintain good social distancing practices, volunteer members should only be at the fire stations in response to incidents and in order to complete necessary work such as restoring equipment from previous incidents.

All Banquet hall rentals will be cancelled and all activity within the Banquet hall will cease.

All shared food products shall be disposed of immediately and such shall not be brought to the stations. Only individually wrapped food products shall be utilized.

- **Meetings** – The Union Fire Company will suspended all in person meetings at the Union Fire Company, telecommunication will be used whenever available.

Fire Company personnel will not attend meetings or other events on behalf of the Union Fire Company, except in a virtual manner.

- **Training** – The Union Fire Company will suspend all internal training events. The training committee will work to keep personnel training going thru the Fire Company Website and other means. Additionally, attendance at all outside training activities and events will be discontinued.
- **Fire Prevention / Public Relations** – The Union Fire Company will cancel all Fire Prevention and Public Relation events, including but not limited to Fire Station Tours, Fire Prevention visits, public speaking events.
- **Health Status** - All responding personnel shall indicate their health status on the Union Fire Company run sheet. This is meant to document responding personnel who have symptoms that do not meet the standards which would require the member to quarantine for 14 days.
- **Visitors** – No visitors, including immediate family members, personnel from other organizations and vendors shall be permitted within the fire stations, without the approval of the Fire Chief, President, EMS Manager, or Chairman of the Board of Directors.

LEVEL 2

Heath reports indicate presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the response area, or the normal mutual aid response area. Operations of the Union Fire Company are modified to limit potential exposure to the Fire Company Personnel.

Level 2 includes all of the standards identified in level 3 & 4, in addition to the following. In all cases the more stringent standard applies.

- **Fire Operations** - The Fire Chief will assign SCBA Masks and regulators to key personnel based on availability, training, and call volume. These personnel will utilize only these masks and regulators.
- **Station Assignments** – The Fire Chief will redistribute apparatus and will assign personnel to specific stations, based on geographical location, training levels, and other factors. Personnel will only respond to their assigned station and will be prohibited from entering their non-assigned station.

Fire officers will work with personnel to create a duty crew for each station at all times possible. When duty crews are in place, only the duty crew shall respond to the station, no other personnel shall respond.

- **Junior Firefighter** – Junior firefighters will no longer be permitted to respond to incidents.

LEVEL 1

Members or Employees of the Union Fire Company have presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19. Operations of the Union Fire Company are modified to limit potential exposure to the Fire Company Personnel.

Level 1 includes all of the standards identified in level 2,3 & 4, in addition to the following. In all cases the more stringent standard applies.

- **Fire Operations** – Fire response will be modified to utilize on-duty driver response to station and POV response by personnel. Response will be limited to a single suppression/rescue unit, except on structure fire responses. Key personnel will be assigned portable radios to coordinate response on the 21FD channel.
- **Exterior Firefighter** – Exterior firefighters will no longer be permitted to respond to incidents.
- **Mutual Aid** - Mutual Aid will be coordinated on a as needed basis should a significant number of personnel become affected.

