



Town of Farmington Fire Department
1 Monteith Drive Farmington, CT 06032

Phone: (860) 675-2322 Fax: (860) 675-2323

www.Farmington-CT.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: TFFD Personnel

FROM: Steve Hoffmann, Director of Fire & Rescue Services *SH*

DATE: April 16, 2020

RE: Return to Work Policy (COVID-19)

Firefighters with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

Firefighters with suspected or confirmed cases will not return to duty until:

1. Test-based strategy. Exclude from work until
 - Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **AND**
 - Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

OR

2. Non-test-based strategy. Exclude from work until
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
 - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **AND,**
 - At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*

Additional:

- May be quarantined for 14 days, or more, while under supervision of Farmington Valley Health Department or frequent check-ins by the Director of Fire & Rescue Services to evaluate need for extension of return to work status.



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Asymptomatic Firefighters with High or Medium Risk of Exposure to Known COVID-19

Medium and high-risk health care COVID-19 exposures are defined by the CDC. The risk assessment for these types of exposures can be found here via the CDC website and via Department Memo issued on 3/19/20, Exposure Procedures for Firefighter/EMTs

In general, exposures are categorized based on the following:

- Whether there was prolonged close contact with a sick patient **AND**
- The type of PPE the Firefighter was wearing at the time of the exposure

According to CDC, *prolonged close contact* for Firefighter exposures is defined as:

- a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters), of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time (such as caring for the patient; or sitting within 6 feet of the patient in a room); or
- b) having unprotected direct contact with infectious secretions or excretions of the patient (e.g., being coughed on, touching used tissues with a bare hand). The length of time is not defined and should be determined by Farmington Valley Health Department.

The Town of Farmington Fire Department, may determine that the Firefighter(s) with medium or high-risk exposures to COVID-19 will **not be allowed** to respond or report for duty until 14 days after the exposure:

- Actively monitor for signs (temperature) and symptoms (cough) consistent with COVID-19 infection; AND
- Adhere to cough etiquette and hand hygiene; AND

Adherence to the above criteria should be monitored by an occupational health or infection control professional, in this case the Farmington Valley Health Department

If the member is to develop a fever (measured temperature > 100.4° or subjective fever) or respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the monitoring period, the following should occur:



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- Notify the Director of Fire & Rescue Services so they can coordinate consultation and referral to a healthcare provider for further evaluation as well as notification to the Farmington Valley Health Department.
- Testing for COVID-19 should be performed, if available. (If testing is not available, follow guidance above for suspected or confirmed firefighter(s).)

If the Firefighter tests positive, refer to guidance above for suspected or confirmed firefighter(s).

If negative, they can return to work under the following conditions:

- Symptoms have resolved;
- It has been at least 72 hours since the fever has gone without use of fever-reducing medications (for persons who develop fever);
- (If new symptoms arise during the 14-day monitoring period retesting is indicated as above.)

Asymptomatic Firefighters Exposed to a Household Member with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

Being exposed to a household member with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, is considered a high or medium risk exposure by CDC.

Recommended Home Care Precautions include:

- Isolation of the ill person in their own bedroom with their own bathroom, if possible
- The ill person should wear a facemask when they have to be around other people in the household; household members should wear a facemask if they have to handle bodily fluids of the ill person
- No sharing of household items with the ill person
- Frequent handwashing of all household members
- Daily cleaning of high touch surfaces
- No visitors to the household
- The ill person should not care for household pets



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CDC recommends that persons exposed to a household member with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 stay home and monitor their symptoms for 14 days from the date of the last exposure. However, it should be recognized that the monitoring period for Firefighter(s) exposed to ill household members could be longer than 14 days dependent on the length of illness of the household member and how well recommended precautions can be implemented in the home.

If another household member becomes ill, the monitoring period would again have to be extended. These decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Director of Fire & Rescue Services and Farmington Valley Health Department.

Reference Documents:

- Return-to-Work Guidance for Healthcare Workers and First Responders during the COVID-19 Pandemic (3-30-2020) – DPH Memo
- Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 (Interim Guidance) – CDC Website