**The Impact of COVOID -19 on Our First Responders**

By Lieutenant (Ret.) Joseph “Paul” Manley, IPSA Board Member

In the United States, an increasing number of police officers, firefighters, EMTs and paramedics have been ordered into 14-day quarantine at home or in quarters after exposure to a COVID-19 positive patient.

As of March 18, 2020, we are aware of 25 Kirkland Washington firefighters and two police officers; four King County Washington EMS paramedics, including two interns; 77 San Jose California firefighters; six Reedy Creek Florida firefighters; 9 Albany County New York deputy sheriff’s; and five FDNY EMS providers who have been ordered into quarantine. There is a high likelihood additional personnel will be reported as in quarantine, quarantine completed, or released from quarantine in the days ahead.

**Kirkland, WA** – More than two dozen first responders have been quarantined for possible exposure to the coronavirus after they responded to a nursing home where numerous people have tested positive.

The City of Kirkland put out a press release that confirmed 25 Kirkland firefighters and two Kirkland police officers have been placed under quarantine “out of an abundance of caution” after they were exposed to the virus at a nursing home.

Kirkland Fire Station 21 has been shut down to house the first responders under quarantine who cannot, or do not, want to go into home quarantine for fear of infecting family and friends. Neighboring fire departments will be providing additional support as one-quarter of the 100 sworn members of the Kirkland Fire Department remain under quarantine.

**King County, Wash** - EMS paramedics worked for American Medical Response Company (AMR) were not informed when they transported a patient with COVOID-19 symptoms.

**San Jose, CA -** The San Jose Fire Department placed 77 firefighters under quarantine after four of the department's members tested positive for the coronavirus. Originally, City officials had only identified one firefighter as being infected with the virus earlier Thursday. That firefighter worked shifts at several San Jose stations before he was tested, according to KNTV.

The initial firefighter was diagnosed after flying home to Southern California. His condition is reported to be serious, and he is an intensive care unit, KNTV added.

Officials have not been able to identify the time or point of exposure of the first firefighter. It was not known who else might have been exposed to the virus after coming in contact with the firefighter. Several family members of infected firefighters also have tested positive for the coronavirus or exhibited. The city has temporarily shut down stations possibly exposed to COVID-19, and they are being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, according to KNTV.

**Reedy Creek, Fla** - Reedy Creek Improvement District, the City-state that acts as Walt Disney World’s governmental agency, reports that 7 firefighters and emergency medical technicians have been put under quarantine due to Coronavirus according to WFTV Channel 9.

**Albany County, NY-** According to Sheriff Apple, An Albany County Sheriff's deputy has tested positive for COVID-19.

The deputy, who was assigned to the judicial center, is recovering and has minor symptoms. The positive diagnosis forced the county to quarantine nine other deputies, putting a staffing strain on the department as the outbreak infects a constantly increasing number of Americans.

**New York, NY** - Officials announced an FDNY medical provider tested positive for the virus late Monday. The provider, as well as several of the member’s coworkers, are currently under mandatory quarantine.

The member did not show symptoms of the virus, but worked three shifts prior to testing positive. A statement released by the FDNY said the member had potentially exposed 11 patients and 5 other EMS providers.

This news is highly illustrative of the dangerous role that our first responders play each and every day. Despite the ongoing risks associated with this virus for first responders, their families and their friends, they are all absolutely dedicated to protecting their communities with the services they need during these uncertain times.

About the Author

Paul Manley is a 30+ year public safety professional and adjunct faculty member at Endicott College in Beverly, MA. Paul is the Founder of Risk Mitigation Technologies, LLC and a retired Police Lieutenant and Executive Officer for the Nahant, Massachusetts Police Department. Paul has a Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice Administration from Anna Maria College and is a Board-Certified Homeland Protection Professional (CHPP). Paul is honored to be a Board Member of the IPSA.