

NEWS RELEASE

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North Metro Fire Taking Measures to Minimize Risk and Spread of COVID-19

Broomfield/Northglenn, CO — With the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Colorado, North Metro Fire Rescue District is taking extra precautions to protect the health and safety of its community members and first responders.

North Metro Fire has implemented additional personal protection protocols for its first responders to help prevent exposure and the spreading of COVID-19 while responding to emergency calls. Additionally, the fire district is temporarily suspending station and engine tours, participation in community events, and other nonessential activities and external trainings that could expose firefighters and critical staff to the virus.

“We have been working with our public health partners and closely following COVID-19 and its potential impact on our community and emergency operations,” said David Ramos, North Metro Fire Chief. “One of our top priorities is to keep our first responders healthy, so we can continue to respond and help those who need us. Equally as important, we want to ensure we take the right precautions to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to our patients and at-risk populations.”

North Metro Fire joins a number of Denver metro area fire departments in adopting measures for emergency response and scaling back from external events. The proactive steps align with recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“We realize everyone has their own idea of how to respond to a public health threat such as COVID-19, and we don’t want residents to panic or live in fear. However, we know that early containment, through social distancing, vigilant hygiene and isolating those infected by the virus, is the best way we as a community can protect ourselves and protect our most vulnerable populations,” said Ramos. “That’s why we are taking extra steps to protect our community and to help prevent the rapid spread of the virus locally.”

Precautionary measures taken for emergency operations include:

- 911 dispatchers will screen patients who call with an emergency.
- If COVID-19 is suspected, crews will limit exposure by wearing protective gear and restricting the patient exam to one paramedic.
- Family members or other riders will not be allowed to ride in the ambulance with the patient. In rare cases, the parent or guardian of a patient who is a minor may be allowed to ride in the ambulance.

- If the patient is suspected of having COVID-19 and needs to go to the hospital, North Metro Fire crews will create a protected area in the ambulance to minimize exposure and will notify the designated hospital. The ambulance will be decontaminated following the transport of the patient to the hospital.

Additionally, North Metro Fire is also suspending business travel, multi-agency trainings, participation in community events and other nonessential external activities for 30 days, at which point the fire district will reassess the threat and risk to health and safety.

Guidelines for Self Protection and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

All residents are encouraged to follow the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the CDC and their local public health departments for the latest information on COVID-19.

The following are guidelines from CDPHE and CDC ([online source](#)):

Take everyday actions to protect yourself and those you love

- There are effective ways to reduce the risk to yourself and the people you care about.
 - Frequently and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or use your inner elbow or sleeve.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Stay home if you're sick, and keep your children home if they are sick.
 - Clean surfaces in your home, and personal items such as cell phones, using regular household products.
- Be calm and prepared.
 - FEMA: [Guidance for COVID-19 preparedness](#)
 - CDC: [Getting your household ready for COVID-19](#)
 - CDPHE Environmental Cleaning Guidance for COVID-19 - [English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Simplified Chinese](#) | [Vietnamese](#)
- People who are not sick do not need face masks to protect themselves from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. Ill people should wear a mask to protect family members or in any scenario where needed to prevent the spread of germs.

Higher-risk people

- Certain people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including:
 - Older people (over age 60), especially those over 80.
 - People who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease, or diabetes.
 - Older people with chronic medical conditions are at the highest risk.
- People at higher risk should take action now to be prepared for this virus if there is an outbreak in their community. CDC has the information you need to prepare.
- Everyone's daily preventive actions are important in reducing spread to people who may experience more severe illness.

Colorado Hotline for COVID-19 Questions: CO-HELP is Colorado's call line for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). People who have general questions about COVID-19 can call CO HELP at 303-389-1687

or 1-877-462-2911, for answers in many languages, or email them at COHELP@RMPDC.org for answers in English.

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North Metro Fire Rescue District

North Metro Fire Rescue District is dedicated to providing quality service to its residents through fire protection, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response and specialized rescue. Formed in 1946, the District now covers over 60 square miles with a population of approximately 123,000 people including the City and County of Broomfield, the City of Northglenn and unincorporated areas of Boulder, Adams, Weld and Jefferson Counties.