



# THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **March 20, 2020**

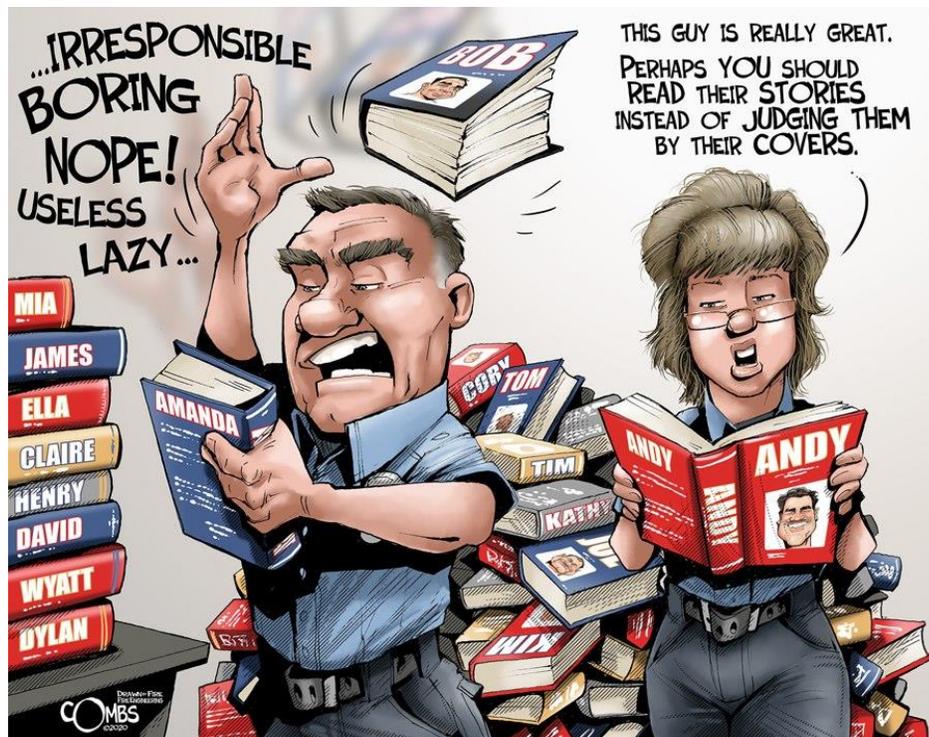
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## Quote of the Week

"Unity is strength. When there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."

-Mattie Stepanek



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## The Chief's Desk

Sooooo, this has been an interesting week. It seems COVID 19 has hijacked our lives and work. I know my schedule seemingly opened up given all the canceled meetings, only to be filled with new meetings related to the virus. We are doing what we can to keep everyone informed, review current plans, and develop additional contingencies. The difficult part of this entire situation is determining the balance between apathy and complete hysteria. Apathy certainly isn't appropriate as we service a large population considered at risk based on age and pre-existing health conditions. Complete hysteria is absolutely the incorrect approach. It is very likely that many in the population have already been exposed, many may have had the virus and recovered, and for healthy people the virus will likely manifest itself as a nasty cold or flu.

At this point, the virus is considered by many to be communally spread. For first responders, this means that an exposure with no symptoms is not something for which you will be quarantined. There are some guidelines listed later in this edition that outline what is or is not considered an exposure. That said, if every first responder or health care worker that was exposed to the virus was quarantined, we'd run out of people. To that point, it is vitally important that you wear your supplied PPE if there is any question about whether a person has symptoms. DO NOT diagnose in the field, you are not a lab and therefore cannot confirm one way or another based solely on a person's symptoms. Protect yourself, protect our patients, and protect our emergency response system.

Remember to perform a doorway check before entering a residence. You may have been called for a cardiac episode for one resident, but another person in the home may be sick with flu like symptoms. Take your time, use the tools we've provided, and rely on your training. Ensure that you maintain your situational awareness at all times.

This morning, Friday, the off going crews will start checking the temperatures of the oncoming crews. If an individual has a temperature of 100 or more, they will be sent home. The new recommendation from the CDC is that a person must be fever free for 72 hours before returning to work. We understand this can create an issue for folks as it relates to your sick banks especially since our current workers compensation company 7710 refuses to provide coverage for COVID exposure. To that end, you will be coded in Telestaff as SLC (Sick Leave COVID) and the leave will not be deducted from your sick bank. Your Battalion Chief's will be covering this with you in upcoming ZOOM meetings. If you need to call in sick due to a fever, you will need to call the BC not just log sick in Telestaff. Operations personnel who have flu like symptoms need to be tested so we can track the virus and any potential exposure.

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### Upcoming Events:

Mar 23 – Welcome Recruit Academy, Conference Call Work Comp Pool, Board Meetings, whatever COVID Does  
Mar 24 – Whatever COVID does, Office  
Mar 25 – Work Comp, COVID stuff  
Mar 26 – Likely Work Comp and COVID Stuff

### Board Meeting:

Mar 23rd Admin  
CVFD – 1600-1630  
CYFD – 1630-1700  
CAFMA – 1700-1830



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## **COVID 19 Plan**

**By: EMS Chief Doug Niemyński**

CAFMA has been preparing for the Covid-19 virus since the initial outbreak began in China. We started by sending out mandatory training to all operations personnel. The training covered proper use of personal protective equipment, disinfection procedures for equipment, how to handle a workplace exposure to the virus, and pertinent information about Covid-19 from the Centers for Disease Control.

Prescott Regional Communications Center (PRCC) has a screening process in place that included input from Prescott FD, CAFMA, and YRMC. They will ask the callers if anyone has signs and symptoms of the flu including fever, cough and shortness of breath/difficulty breathing. If the caller says yes to any of the questions, an alert is sent to responding crews via the mobile data computer (MDC) in the engine. When crews arrive on scene, they will perform a “doorway assessment” asking the same questions of the occupants inside the home or facility. They may ask the patient to come outside for evaluation in the open air for our safety if the patient is able to move normally. All CAFMA crews have been treating any potential flu responses as possible Covid-19 cases and should be wearing the full personal protective equipment (PPE) to include gowns, facemasks with eye shields, gloves and booties on their feet. Medical treatment is provided as appropriate and the patient is prepped for transport.

When patient care has been transferred to either the ambulance for transport or the hospital the crew goes through an immediate decontamination process. Decontamination includes spraying the EMT or Paramedic's gown with a 10 percent bleach and water solution in a spray bottle in an effort to kill the potential virus. They will then remove all the personal protective equipment and place it in a biohazard trash bag. Finally, the medical equipment used on the call will be thoroughly wiped down with the bleach solution so it is safe for the next run. All personnel will then use hand sanitizer before getting back in the engine.

Numerous meetings have taken place between CAFMA and all of our partners to include AMR, Prescott Fire, and YRMC. Additionally, we have remained in contact with the Yavapai County Health Department as well as Yavapai County Emergency Management. This is a unified approach to ensure our responders as well as the public are protected.

One big operational change that will take place in the next couple of days is the implementation of a Duty Medic. The Duty Medic's job will be to help screen callers within the 911 system. The objective is to get the patient the proper care they need without over whelming the EMS system and the Emergency Room with non-emergent patients. CAFMA is also prepared to use our alternative response vehicles Rescue 1, and Rescue 2 to supplement the EMS system when demand exceeds current system capacity.

As more test results come in and more people are tested, the region and the State of Arizona will see an increase in confirmed Covid-19 cases. The current logjam related to obtaining test results is due to a limited number of labs available to process a large number of tests. Each Covid-19 test takes up to 4 hours to complete. In order to get tested there must be a physician's order. Local labs are now able to perform the test so that is some positive news.

As first responders, we must ensure that we keep ourselves healthy so we can respond to protect our community. Additionally, we must ensure to the best of our ability that we are not spreading the virus to those in our community considered at high risk.

Starting today, Friday, CAFMA will be monitoring our operations personnel's temperatures each day so we can identify anyone that may be ill. If you are sick, stay home. We are here to answer the call for help and will continue to do so no matter what. We are trained. We are protected. We are ready.

Stay kind to each other!

Doug Niemynski  
EMS Chief, CAFMA

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## **COVID Flow Chart ("Borrowed" from Scottsdale FD who "Borrowed" it from somewhere else)**

The following information is based on guidance provided by the Maricopa County Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control. Any questions you may have should be routed through your supervisor.

Here are a few of the more commonly asked questions...

### **What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?**

- Symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

### **Who is at risk for having severe disease related to COVID-19?**

- Most people who contract COVID-19 will experience mild symptoms; however, similar to flu, individuals who have the highest risk for severe illness are older adults and those with chronic conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes.

### **What is the treatment for COVID-19?**

- There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 will receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

### **How can I get tested for COVID-19?**

- That decision will have to be made with you and your personal healthcare provider.

### **Am I covered under workers comp for COVID-19?**

- Each incident will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through normal city processes.

### **Should I come to work if I am feeling ill?**

- No

### **What about high risk employees?**

- Early information shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes **older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions** like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease.
- These cases should be discussed with your immediate supervisor and will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

### **Where can I get more information?**

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

## Workforce COVID-19 Risk Assessment per CDC Guidelines

### THIS IS NOT APPLICABLE TO FIRST RESPONDERS

**You are considered HIGH RISK if...** You are living in the same household as a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection *without using recommended precautions for [home care](#) and [home isolation](#)*

**You are considered MEDIUM RISK if...** You have been in close contact with a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, or You are living in the same household as a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection *while consistently using recommended precautions for [home care](#) and [home isolation](#)*, or employees living with someone who has not been confirmed positive but is exhibiting symptoms specific to COVID-19.

**You are considered LOW RISK if...** You have been in the same indoor environment (e.g., an office, general workspace) as a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 for a prolonged period but not meeting the definition of close contact (within 6 feet and/or direct contact with infectious secretions)

**You are considered NO IDENTIFIABLE RISK if...** You have had interactions with a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection that do not meet any of the high-, medium- or low-risk conditions above, such as walking by the person or being briefly in the same room

#### Critical Infrastructure Positions

Critical infrastructure personnel may be permitted to continue work following potential exposure to COVID-19 provided they remain asymptomatic. Other personal situations will be evaluated with immediate supervisor on a case-by-case basis.

#### SYMPTOMATIC

##### ANYONE having COVID-19 specific symptoms

- Fever
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Do not come to work, or if at work, notify your supervisor and Call your healthcare provider right away

Before going to your medical appointment, be sure to tell your healthcare provider about your close contact with someone who is confirmed to have or is being evaluated for COVID-19.

Follow the direction of your healthcare provider

Notify your supervisor of your status

#### ASYMPTOMATIC

##### HIGH RISK

- Quarantine (voluntary or under public health orders) in a location to be determined by public health authorities.
- No public activities.
- Daily active monitoring for symptoms.

##### MEDIUM RISK

- Practice social distancing.
- Actively monitor symptoms.
- Discuss workplace options with immediate supervisor (including staying at home).

##### LOW RISK

You can continue with your normal daily activities as provided by current guidelines.

##### ALL RISK CATEGORIES

Monitor themselves for symptoms and maintain focus on proper personal hygiene and area housekeeping consistent with COVID-19 guidance.

## **Chief's Desk Continued**

**Editorial** - According to the president/owner of 7710, if we were more like doctors and nurses who deal with sick people on a more regular basis, maybe they would consider covering exposures for our Paramedics and EMT's. WTH?? We are still working to start a statewide work comp risk pool for Fire Districts so we can avoid what in my opinion are the unscrupulous practices of some commercial carriers. Unfortunately, 7710 worked the legislature yesterday telling legislators that if they killed SB 1160 and squashed any appropriations that would help seed a workers comp risk pool, they would freeze rates for next year. Both were scuttled, for now. So, you're going to freeze our rates and deny coverage while providing substandard service? Thank you for that. We will continue to do everything we can despite 7710's efforts to get our pool up and running this year. Without the risk pool, 7710 is the only workers compensation option for Fire Districts outside of the state's high-risk pool.

We are working with our non-operations personnel in much the same way as operations. CAFMA is a system and each part of the system has to be functioning in order for the entire system to function. This means we need our non-operations personnel healthy and at work so we can continue providing services. However, if someone has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, they need to stay home or go home. Again, you will need to coordinate with your supervisor rather than just logging sick in Telestaff. Your sick bank will not be charged. An email outlining non-operations personnel procedures will be sent out Friday, today, to Chief Tharp, Chief Bliss, and Fire Marshal Chase for dissemination and explanation.

Additional measures include:

1. Restricted access to the fire stations to include no family visits
2. We ask that operations crews refrain from coming to the administrative offices. Your BC can pick-up and drop off what you need. We have ZOOM should you need to meet with anyone in particular.

I have reached out to the Bureau of EMS seeking an appropriate methodology for placing Rescue 1 and 2 in service as either isolation units specifically for potential COVID cases, or as ambulances should call volume exceed capacity. Mr. Mullins asked me to send an email with the question, which I did, but have not heard back. He did say we would work it out. As we are all well aware, transport capabilities in our area are challenging under our normal call load. Should we have a run on the 911 system related to a COVID scare transport capabilities will be challenged. To that end, I have given direction to take whatever steps necessary to ensure our units are utilized should it be necessary. We will not wait for bureaucratic approval.

I am working on a better long-term solution, but you know how these things work. That said I learned that Maricopa Ambulance submitted a CON application on Thursday this week that specifically serves CAFMA's area as well as some other more rural areas. Their application overlays CON 62, however their focus will be on our jurisdiction as well as some of the harder to reach underserved areas. This will definitely help, but certainly more could be done as our area continues to grow and call volume continues to increase.

**Editorial** - Unfortunately, while we face a public health crisis, the state will still require them to go through a 12-18 month arduous and expensive red tape laden bureaucratic process. Odd that we are facing a public health crisis and yet the state continues to hold our area hostage in regards to a lack of ambulance transport capabilities. Shut down bars, restaurants, and businesses, but whatever you do don't let a competent fire department transport patients, and make another provider willing to service the area jump through circus hoops – after all, we have antiquated rules and regulations to follow. The state is well aware that there are issues in our area, yet here we are.

In his State of the State address during the opening of the legislative session, Governor Ducey said that it remains a priority for him to ease regulations within the state. To that end Governor, I have some ideas I would be happy to share with you (via video conference of course – social distancing and all). I digress... Rest assured, I'm not done yet.

As of this morning, the Governor ordered gyms and bars closed as well as ordering restaurants to cease dine in options throughout Yavapai County. This is a very difficult time for small business owners and many of our friends and neighbors as they are side lined without work. Jen and I will order dine out this weekend from a local restaurant. We normally don't go out to eat much, but I'd like to do my part even if it seems insignificant, to support our local businesses. I'd encourage those that can, to do the same.

Something has to give soon. You simply cannot shut the world down indefinitely and expect things to improve. I read an article this morning from the BBC encouraging countries to start planning their exit strategy from the shutdown. Given the lack of a vaccine, and the fact that the virus in some form is ever present, we must have a way to slowly open things back up while lessening the impact of additional cases of COVID 19.

For now, do what you can to keep you and your family healthy, and shop local to help our economy whenever you can.