



Washington State
Council of Fire Fighters

DATE: March 12, 2020
TO: IAFF 7th District, WSCFF Members
FROM: IAFF 7th District VP Ricky Walsh
WSCFF President Dennis Lawson
SUBJ: COVID-19 Update

As we navigate through this rapidly evolving Coronavirus situation, we are learning and sharing our experiences. We have witnessed, first-hand, several local leaders doing fantastic work on behalf of their members, families, and communities. We are grateful for their efforts and support as the WSCFF, IAFF 7th District and IAFF continue to operate as a team.

As events have been centered in Washington State, the WSCFF Executive Board has consistently been briefed and relied upon to provide direction, feedback, and share information. We know many of you may have ideas and would like to share them. We respectfully ask that you work through the WSCFF executive board via your district representative or IAFF DVP Walsh to ensure we maintain consistency in our messaging and do not create confusion.

As the virus spreads to other states in the 7th District, we will respond as a team with the IAFF, WSCFF and the office of the 7th District as a resource. We will utilize best practices developed in Washington State to assist Idaho, Montana, Alaska and other states across our great IAFF. And, we will adapt as necessary as this continues to be a moving target.

We understand and appreciate that employers will take action to ensure that the operation and delivery of services continues. Conversely, it is equally important for our leaders to notify employers that the union will request to bargain the decisions, impacts, and affects related to any changes that would alter the agreed upon contract, recognized practice, policy or other means that would provide a benefit to your members.

Some contract areas that should require your consideration:

Conditions in which a member would be quarantined or isolated.

- Conditions to release, e.g., when members return to work.
- Status while quarantined or isolated – specific to pay and benefits.
- Who pays the cost associated with the quarantine, housing, food, medical, etc.
- Workers compensation claims for those who test positive.
- Any additional safety equipment or precautions that may be needed.
- Staffing: utilizing your own people before they open it up to others.
- Modify limits on leave to address the recent school closures. Your employer may find it in both party's best interest to allow more people off on vacation or holiday leave rather than having members use sick leave.
- If in contract negotiations (especially in tourist destinations) an extension to your current contract and/or simply an agreement to a wage increase. This may assist your employer and buy time until the depth of this issue is fully recognized.
- The pre-screening or vital monitoring of personnel before shift starts. We have had issues related to this practice and would ask that locals seriously consider how this would be implemented.
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We are continuing to work on:

- Notification back to members if they have seen or transported a patient who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Identifying strategies to get all of Labor involved in the municipal, county operations.
- EMS, DEM, DOH, etc.
- Ensuring the state and federal stockpile of PPE is made available to first responders and health care workers. We have asked to be briefed on the distribution plan to understand the methodology of who is getting what and why.
- As the Federal Government has recently approved funding to assist in this fight, our department leadership will need to ask for assistance to maintain staffing, buy equipment, or pursue assistance for other needs.

Do not minimize the importance of this disease. It is affecting our communities, and people are afraid and hurting. Continue to be compassionate and professional in your actions.

Stay safe!