

Dear 7<sup>th</sup> District Affiliate Presidents,

I thank all of you for your work always however I give you all kudos for the additional work necessitated by the ever-evolving event of the COVID-19 virus. This has consumed this office since our first confirmed death in the 7<sup>th</sup> District back on February 28<sup>th</sup> and I am sure it is consuming yours now.

I have leaned heavily on WSCFF President Lawson and his executive board during this time of crisis. The sheer volume of information that we as a team has waded through is large. From the beginning, as always, we took a team approach utilizing our standing committees that exists within the WSCFF and the IAFF to assist us in assisting you to assure proper care of our members as well the citizens we serve daily. I thank all that have been working everyday on your behalf and I have spoken to many of them more in the last 23 days than in the last year.....or so it feels like.

This team has focused on gathering information, verifying information, interpreting said information and then utilizing our communication platforms to get a consistent message out. Granted, some things have changed, and we have done our best to recognize such, respond to those changes to be on top of this ever-changing event. Now, as we foresee a longer path to some sense of normalcy, we continue to develop documents to assist you.

There are many attachments to this email. One is a LOA that one Local developed and shared with this office. I handed it over to our 7<sup>th</sup> District ELS class who then in turn dissected it and made it better. Please feel free to use it at your worksite. Also, you will see an opinion from IAFF Legal regarding the Ryan White Act as other states are having problems accessing patient information. Yes, the Ryan White Act applies to COVID 19. Again, from the IAFF legal and answer to the question of how to handle C&B mandated Union meetings and/or elections.

Additionally, we have worked up a best practice for leave usage that you should get an agreement with your Employer. We feel this is the best alternative recognizing that some employers will push back, again bargainable. As well a document from KCFCA on "return to work guideline" that you can convert and put your own department logo on.

We also put out an inquiry to attorneys practicing in all four of the 7<sup>th</sup> District states asking if there were any statutes or citations that would allow for our collective bargaining rights to be infringed upon due to a governor or POTUS declaring a "state of emergency". The answer was unanimously a "no". I state this because many a fire chief believes that they can unilaterally make changes during this crisis time. Please refrain from signing a document that allows for an employer to side-step their obligation to bargain changes, even for a short period of time. It is our belief that Labor should be in the war room/command room with administration during this time of crisis decision making.

And finally, beware of employers wanting to "hire" single individual resources. Our stance is that resources shall be shared in units with full crews. This is a team sport and we know the importance of building our teams over long periods of time that allows for trust in each other to elevate causing the best in efficiency and safety. As well be wary of IAFF members in your departments willing to scab out in another department which is unacceptable and will show divisiveness. Our members must resist opportunities to serve as single resource individuals. This would fracture collective efforts.

More to come as you do the best you can. Stay Safe!