

Resolution to Support the Prioritization of Firefighters and EMS Personnel in Accessing COVID-19 Vaccinations, Treatments, Testing, and Supplies

Resolution offered by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the National Fire Protection Association, and the National Volunteer Fire Council

Whereas, the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and its ensuing illness COVID-19, is an incredibly dangerous and highly communicable illness that is spreading throughout the United States;

Whereas, firefighters and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel face a significant risk of exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus when caring for EMS patients and providing other fire suppression and emergency response services;

Whereas, fire and EMS departments have faced chronic challenges in accessing sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency;

Whereas, fire and EMS departments were de-prioritized by the federal government for access to COVID-19 related PPE and testing in the early phases of the COVID-19 public health emergency response;

Whereas, some state governments are continuing to de-prioritize fire and EMS departments in accessing COVID-19 related PPE and testing;

Whereas, more than 60 firefighters and EMS personnel have died as a result of COVID-19 that was presumably contracted in the line of duty;

Whereas, the federal government is developing a proposal to identify a distribution strategy and prioritization schedule for a future, FDA-approved, COVID-19 vaccination;

Whereas, the federal government has identified the need to provide prioritized vaccinations to healthcare providers but have not identified firefighters and EMS personnel as healthcare providers;

Whereas, given earlier decisions to de-prioritize firefighters and EMS providers in accessing COVID-19 PPE and testing, fire departments are concerned that firefighters and EMS personnel may not be placed on the highest prioritization tier for access to a COVID-19 vaccine;

Whereas, the National Academies for Science, Engineering, and Medicine have recommended that all firefighters and EMS personnel be placed on Tier 1A, the highest priority tier, for receiving a COVID-19 vaccine once it is approved for public distribution;

Now, let it therefore be resolved that the Congressional Fire Service Institute fully supports efforts to ensure fire and EMS personnel are placed on the highest priority tier for access to COVID-19 vaccinations, treatments, testing, and PPE.