



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **March 27, 2020**

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Quote of the Week

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

-Marie Curie



The Chief's Desk

Week two of the COVID 19 siege, at least for me since I was on vacation in Moab the first week and "missed out." This is not like anything that I've experienced before in my career. Pandemics like H1N1 and SARS did not cause the mass shut down of our economy, nor did we experience a spread of the diseases on this scale to my knowledge. The difficulty with this, in part, is the lack of real data. Yes, there are a lot of numbers, charts, and graphs floating around, but each one seems to lack significant data points. For example, how many had the virus in December, January, or February and tested negative for the flu, but no one knew what they had.

Some, like me, rarely go to the doctor, so there is likely a large number of people who just suffered through whatever they had and were never tested for anything. From what we can tell, the largest number of people during that three month period have recovered. Some of the maps and graphs fail to subtract the number who have recovered from those who are currently sick, and none are able to estimate the numbers prior to March. To that end, be careful of getting caught up in the headlines, and social media hysteria. Use your critical thinking skills to formulate and ask questions while working to help stop the spread of the virus. You can also help by not spreading misinformation. If you can't verify it, don't say it.

My message to you remains the same as last week – do not overreact. It's important that we take a well-reasoned and measured approach to everything we do. CAFMA continues to operate under a modified business as usual plan. The current modifications include:

- No public or ops access to the administrative offices. BC's can pick-up or drop off what you need.
- No public access inside the fire stations
- Our involvement in public events have been canceled, because the events have been canceled.
- We have instituted temperature checks for on coming and off going crews, as well as for those who access the gym areas
- We will institute temperature checks for administrative staff on Monday, which includes prevention.
- The remainder of the Senior Leadership Academy will likely be canceled
- In partnership with Prescott FD we have implemented on-duty 24 hour medics to assist PRCC

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Upcoming Events:

Mar 30 – AFCA Reps update, Conference call radio thing, MAC Meeting
Mar 31 – Whatever COVID does, Office
April 1 – COVID stuff, IAFC FRI Conference Call, CYFD Special Board meeting interview board candidate for vacancy
April 2 – AFDA Meeting, Weekly staff meeting
April 3- AFCA Executive Board Call

Board Meeting:

April 27 Admin

CAFMA – 1700-1830



PPE Levels

By: Assistant Chief Scott Bliss

In terms of supply levels, CAFMA continues to be in reasonable shape. We are pulling from our cache of pandemic supplies to provide needed masks and other PPE. Although the overall situation is good, we do face a need to resupply long term and the ability to do that is not currently available. Most suppliers are backordered and do not have an expected date to be able to deliver. We anticipate that the situation will improve as companies such as Scott shift their manufacturing focus to PPE but it will take a while to see the results of that change. For now the fall back supply source for all area agencies is the Yavapai County EOC and they are only able to distribute what they are given by the State. Please follow the direction of Chief Niemynski in regards to appropriate PPE use. This should provide the needed protection while also conserving our limited resources for the higher risk calls.

N95 Use on Medical Calls

By: EMS Engineer Brett Poliakon

We are facing significant supply challenges in regards to PPE. Nationwide, N95's are in limited supply. CAFMA is unable to restock in foreseeable future. The [Surgical faceshield](#) is one form of PPE provided that will help protect you from Covid -19. According to the manufacturer of the faceshields it "Exceeds 99% filtration efficiency at 0.1 microns". We have a large supply of the face shields for traditional patient encounters. With the added splash shield you will have better protection from droplets over the N-95. Covid -19 is considered a droplet driven disease not an airborne disease. If aerosolizing procedures are performed the N-95 must be used in place of the surgical mask. An N-95 should be used when any medication or procedure is being provided that generates aerosolizing particles such as: Intubation, nebulizers, PPV, airway suction, BVM, CPAP, CPR, I-gel, etc.

According to the CDC Person-to-person spread primarily occurs in two ways:

1. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person. Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
2. Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. A [surgical faceshield](#) will be the best option to protect your eyes, nose and mouth from droplets.

N- 95 reuse and disposal CDC guidelines:

1. Consider masking patients when feasible to reduce surface contamination of the respirator.
2. Keep the N95 in a clean, breathable container such as a paper bag between uses. To minimize potential cross-contamination, store respirators so that they do not touch

each other. Ensure the person assigned the respirator is clearly identified so you don't cross contaminate each other. Storage containers should be disposed of or cleaned regularly.

3. Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the respirator (if necessary for comfort or to maintain fit).
4. Avoid touching the inside of the respirator. If inadvertent contact is made with the inside of the respirator, perform hand hygiene as described above.
5. Use a pair of clean gloves when donning a used N95 respirator and performing a user seal check. Discard gloves after the N95 respirator is donned and any adjustments are made to ensure the respirator is sitting comfortably on your face with a good seal.
6. Discard N95 respirators following use during aerosol generating procedures, respirators contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other bodily fluids from patients, following close contact with any patient co-infected with an infectious disease requiring contact precautions.

IAFF Guide to Managing Coronavirus Anxiety

During a disease outbreak or pandemic, it is normal to have some anxiety about contracting the virus. Whether you are in high-risk group, concerned about a loved one's health or worried about your own exposure, your feelings are valid. However, if fear of COVID-19 is causing you significant anxiety or consuming most of your energy, these strategies can help you cope:

1. Consistently follow common sense precautions to reduce the spread of germs. Wash your hands often, avoid contact with sick people, stay home if you are sick, cover coughs and sneezes and disinfect your home regularly. Give yourself credit for your efforts in this area and praise others in your family (especially kids and teens) who remain vigilant as well.
2. Find one source of trustworthy health information and stick with it, thus limiting exposure to misinformation and rumors. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or your local health department can provide the most timely and accurate information.
3. Set limits on exposure to news, radio and social media. Consider turning off push notifications from these sources. Limit checking news reports to only once or twice a day for 15 minutes.
4. Find a way to stay connected to family and friends who are part of your normal routine. Whether you are under quarantine or choosing to stay home, communicating over the phone, video chat or text may help reduce feelings of isolation.
5. Have some go-to activities that distract you in the short term and help get coronavirus off your mind. Isolation and unstructured time only increase rumination, allowing anxious thoughts to grow. Distraction activities may include a game on your phone, a favorite television show or working on a home project.
6. While it might not be possible to take your mind off the outbreak entirely, find something relaxing to calm your body and your mind. Relaxing music, taking a bath,

petting your dog or mediation are simple, free activities that help deescalate your nervous system.

7. Try to limit engagement with others who trigger your anxiety, especially those who struggle with their own health anxiety, generally express a negative outlook on life or drain your energy.
8. Get moving. Strive for 30 minutes of physical activity every day. Exercise not only helps improve mood but can boost your immune system as well.
9. Celebrate your health and life today. While you should seek to avoid crowds and interaction with high risk individuals, continue to do daily activities that bring you a sense of joy or purpose.

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Chief's Desk Continued

We started our on-duty medic yesterday in partnership with Prescott FD. What we have found since the implementation of the program late last week is that the call volume for sick cases is increasing, and that there may be simultaneous calls within the 911 system. To that end, beginning today we have assigned one on-duty medic per shift. Jason Butler is A-shift's medic, Mike Kontz is B-shift's medic, and Jory Ingrao is C-shift's medic. As a reminder, these medics are on-duty for 24 hours at a time. They have a cell phone linked directly to dispatch. If dispatch receives a call for someone who complains of "sickness," the call is transferred to the on-duty medic for triage. If the patient sounds critical, units will be dispatched immediately prior to transferring the call. If the patient is not critical, they are triaged by the on-duty medic who follows a formalized decision tree. Depending on the patient, the medic will patch with YRMC for additional direction.

The hope is that patients are triaged and either sent to the appropriate facility for care, or directed to their personal physician. To the best of our ability, we are working to ensure that neither the 911 system nor the hospital emergency rooms become overloaded. Anxiety is running high in our communities as folks are glued to the headlines and news related to COVID 19. Unfortunately, not all of the information is accurate, and some of the headlines are written to illicit fear. It is no wonder people are anxious and unsure. It's our job to help provide a level of calm and reassurance. As I learned in a national video conference yesterday morning, a majority of the tests across the nation are coming back negative. That does not take away from the number of cases that exist, nor does it diminish the fact that some of those who have COVID 19 do end up in the hospital, and some of those have succumbed to the illness. However, it does indicate that not everyone who is sick has COVID 19. In fact, it's still cold and flu season on top of allergy season.

As an update, last week I let you know that our workers compensation carrier 7710 had stated to us as well as AFMA that they would not cover an on-duty contraction of COVID 19. Earlier this week they changed course and have decided to cover documented on-duty exposures. So, please ensure you are documenting your calls, and keep wearing appropriate PPE as prescribed. If you properly wear your PPE,

you are not exposed. We now have a ruling to states health care facilities and health departments must disclose to emergency responders if a patient they transported tests positive for COVID 19.

Our new recruit academy started Monday and will continue as scheduled. We reviewed the CDC's recommendations as well as other state and federal recommendations. Ultimately, we determined that we are well within accepted parameters to move forward with the academy. That said we have made clear to the cadets that should they become ill, they need to stay home. We will cover their hours and ensure that they receive the necessary training. As always, we will regularly reevaluate our plan and adjust as needed moving forward. We will monitor this fluid situation daily so we can make necessary adjustments when required.

Other training will continue as well. There are only two days left of quarterly training in the quarter. This training will continue as scheduled. We will modify future training as needed to lessen the impact on CARTA. Our weight rooms will remain open to our personnel. We know your regular gyms have been closed. To that end, we feel it is best to allow access to our equipment as a way to encourage you to maintain your level of fitness – or improve it, as the case may be. Please decontaminate the equipment after use.

As of today, Friday, Chief Bliss and Chief Abel will be on short-term loan to Yavapai County EMA as subject matter experts (SMEs). Scott and Todd's background with the teams will aid County EMA with establishing a unified command system as well as a logistics and supply chain. They may only be with the County for four days, or it could be two weeks. Our intention is to assist as needed to ensure Yavapai County is ahead of the curve so to speak. Sedona is sending two Type 1 team members to assist, and Prescott FD is looking to send one. It is a team effort, one that I personally feel best serves our entire county.

Currently, there are no defined exit plans to open up businesses, schools, restaurants, etc. Frankly, from what I learned yesterday, there will be some increased level of COVID 19 cases when restrictions are lifted. It's just what happens with pandemics and these types of viruses as people begin to interact again. Typically, the level of spike is determined by how closely people follow safety recommendations. It is our individual responsibility to slow the spread today, and it will remain our responsibility to help slow the spread as the world opens back up for business. If we can avoid panic, and focus on what we can do to help, we will all be healthier. As a weekly reminder, please do not cough, spit, or sneeze on each other and wash your hands. Just say'n.

Some have called for a complete quarantine, kind of a stay in your house thing. I am sorry folks, but I am just not there. Do not misunderstand, I don't think we should be gathering by the hundreds and hugging each other. However, some fresh air, sun light and time with family on a hiking or biking trail is good for the mind, body and soul. Jen and I went for a walk last weekend and saw many families out together – maintaining appropriate physical distancing recommendations. Some of them even had teenagers with their group – weird, teenagers with their parents. Interestingly, no one was on his or her phone. In fact, they all seemed to be talking, laughing, and enjoying some quality time together. As a society, we need more of that right now, and much less hoarding of toilet paper.

Senior staff has established weekly staff meetings for the duration of the COVID 19 Pandemic. The idea is to meet every Thursday afternoon to share information and update each other as we close out the week and prepare for the next. Rather than daily emails that you won't read, we will keep you updated as necessary through *The Review* each week. If something substantive needs to be relayed earlier, we will certainly get the information disseminated. However, if we send you a daily COVID 19 email, you're likely to become dismissive and miss something important.

I said it earlier, and I would like to reinforce it as my closing. There is a lot of anxiety in our community right now. Some of it caused by an overabundance of "information" via social media along with some careless reporting by the media. Our job in these times is not just to respond to the emergency, it is also to provide a level of comfort and calm to each other as well as our community. Our mental and emotional health is just as important as our physical health. Be safe and wear your PPE as directed. When you are off duty, enjoy time with your family, go for a hike, and use common sense to slow the spread.