



HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: All Officers and Members
From: Richard Mann, Assistant Fire Chief *RM*
Subject: Recommendations for Station Uniforms / Bedding
Date: April 3, 2020

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Sylvester Turner

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Controller,
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In response to COVID-19 the Decon Branch of the Houston Fire Department (AHIMT) has researched the information and recommendations from various sources regarding disinfecting station uniforms and bedding. This research has led to the following recommendations to reduce the risk of cross transmission of the COVID-19 virus between the workplace and home environments.

- **Bring at least 3 sets of uniforms to the station** – This would allow you multiple changes of clothes for any circumstance that might arise.
- **Uniforms / Bedding can be washed at the station or at home.** If transporting home or not washing clothes immediately after doffing, contain the clothes in plastic bag. Bedding should be washed after each use.
- **Adding activated oxygen bleach powders to laundry.** Chlorine alternatives (e.g. OxiClean) provide added benefits for fabric and color safety in addition to antimicrobial activity.
- **Clothes should be machine dried.** Dryer temperatures and cycle times are dictated by the materials in the fabrics. Man-made fibers (i.e., polyester and polyester blends) require shorter times and lower temperatures.
- **Disinfecting washer / dryer after wash is not necessary.** Disinfection of the tubs and tumblers of these machines is unnecessary when proper laundry procedures are followed. Infection has not been linked to laundry procedures in residential-care facilities, even when consumer versions of detergents and laundry additives are used.
- **Dry cleaning is not recommended.** Several studies have shown that dry cleaning alone is relatively ineffective in reducing the numbers of bacteria and viruses on contaminated linens
- **Consider showering before leaving the station.** Good idea to make sure you are totally clean before getting in vehicle and returning home.
- **Mattress covers for beds.** Mattresses are porous and sheets provide little to no protection. A mattress cover is generally a fitted, protective material, the purpose of which is to prevent the mattress from becoming contaminated with body fluids and substances. It can also be washed and dried.
- **Boots / Belts wiped down with disinfectant.** Avoid bleach products.

Information obtained from CDC:
Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities

<https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/environmental/index.html>

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