



# HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## GENERAL ORDER

**To:** All Officers and Members  
**From:** Justin Wells, Assistant Chief *JW*  
**Through:** Robert I. Garcia, Assistant Fire Chief *RG*  
**Subject:** Surgical Masks in Response to COVID-19  
**Date:** April 7, 2020

**Mayor**  
Sylvester Turner

**City Council**

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Amy Peck

**District B**  
Jerry Davis

**District C**  
Abbie Kamin

**District D**  
Carolyn Evans-Shabazz

**District E**  
Dave Martin

**District F**  
Tiffany Thomas

**District G**  
Greg Travis

**District H**  
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**District I**  
Robert Gallegos

**District J**  
Edward Pollard

**District K**  
Martha Castex-Tatum

**At-Large 1**  
Mike Knox

**At-Large 2**  
David Robinson

**At-Large 3**  
Michael Kubosh

**At-Large 4**  
Letitia Plummer

**At-Large 5**  
Sallie Alcorn

**Controller,**  
Chris Brown

In response to the increasing evidence of asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 and to reduce the risk of exposure for Houston Fire Department members, Medical Direction has sanctioned the use of cloth masks and surgical masks based on CDC recommendation for the purpose of reducing station contact and member quarantine. The following directives will be in effect for the duration of the community health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- All HFD employees will wear a facemask (cloth mask or paper surgical mask) at all times while on duty in HFD facilities/fire stations.
  - This does not replace the use of all appropriate PPE while on EMS calls as directed in *General Order #20-106*, dated March 26, 2020.
- All HFD employees will practice social distancing (at least 6 feet of separation) **ESPECIALLY** at times where facemasks are not being worn such as when eating or drinking.
  - Members will consider eating meals in different locations/shifts, adjusting sleeping arrangements, minimize shift change interactions, and not lingering once relieved to allow for appropriate social distancing.

When compliance to the above directives are maintained and a member subsequently becomes symptomatic and tests positive for COVID-19, the recommendation from Medical Direction will be that station members be placed on **self-monitoring** by HFD Infection Control and will NOT require quarantine.

If members do **NOT** wear masks at all times or do **NOT** practice social distancing appropriately at the station, then members at the station may be subject to quarantine if a member tests positive based on Infection Control's assessment of the exposure.

Surgical masks will be delivered to HFD District stations for dissemination and accountability. District Chiefs will utilize HFD Form #293 District Station BSI Order Form for additional PPE. Any questions regarding this order will be addressed through the chain of command.

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**Samuel Peña, Fire Chief**

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*"Courage, Commitment and Compassion"*

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