



## **A Statement from London's Fire Chief Regarding COVID-19 and the Fire Service**

**Issued: March 14, 2020**

Like countless organizations throughout the community and around the world, the London Fire Department is actively monitoring the COVID-19 situation. Since this first began to emerge as a global issue in January, we have followed guidance provided by provincial and local health agencies and have taken a number of precautions to help mitigate risk as we focus on the safety and well-being of our community. In addition to health agencies, we are also working with a number of our community partner agencies to support London as we monitor, prepare for and respond to COVID-19 concerns.

To continue ensuring the safety of our community, we also are focusing on the safety of our Fire Fighters and Fire Department staff who serve London every day. This will include reducing non-essential interactions to ensure staff are safe and available to respond as necessary. For the time being, the Fire Department will only be completing essential inspections. As well, as a temporary measure, station tours and public education activities have been cancelled. We look forward to welcoming the community back into our Stations and rescheduling public events when it is appropriate to do so. We also ask that you do not come to fire halls for administrative reasons if you are feeling unwell.

There are a number of precautions our members will be taking on calls. This means you may also see members of our Department wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves and masks for their own protection when they respond.

We know that as the uncertainty about the spread of COVID-19 increases, the level of fear has increased. I want to assure you that the London Fire Department and all emergency services remain fully functional. This is a situation that can change rapidly, but through emergency and contingency planning, we are prepared to manage impacts on our community and on our Department. Like many of you, our staff and their families have been impacted by cancellations and restrictions that are in place in London and surrounding communities. We are working with our staff and with the London Professional Fire Fighters' Association to help ensure they can support their families, while at the same time making every effort to deliver essential service to London.

I am proud of the level of professionalism and commitment demonstrated by all of our Fire Department staff not only to protect and serve the community, but to do our part to support efforts to reduce the risk and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

As always, health officials remain the best source of information about COVID-19. I encourage you to look to the information available at <https://www.healthunit.com/> for updates.