



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmembers Raul Peralez

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: March 12, 2020

Approved by:

Date: 03/12/20

SUBJECT: City Manager's Report - Protecting First Responders & Essential Personnel during COVID-19 Crisis

RECOMMENDATION

Direct the City Manager to report out on the following questions:

1. How are we ensuring our first responders and other essential city personnel are remaining safe and unexposed while continuing to carry out their responsibilities?
2. In the event that our first responders and other essential city personnel are heavily impacted, similar to recent developments regarding our firefighters, what is our plan of action to ensure the safety and critical functions remain operational?

DISCUSSION

We are learning daily about the unprecedented effects from the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic including the uncertain rate of transmissions of this virus. In recent days, it is troubling to hear that essential city personnel vital to the safety and operations of our city are testing positive for COVID-19. For example this week, we confirmed that several of our firefighters had tested positive for COVID-19 with a potential additional transmission in the department. These revelations often result in the practice of quarantining, which by doing so to essential personnel not only impacts the safety of our city but also to the individuals family, friends and colleagues. Our essential personnel is not limited to only our firefighters, police officers and EMTs, but those who maintain the infrastructure for our basic human necessities, such as our sanitation systems.

Despite global efforts to publicly educate on prevention, we are still a long way from our society fully integrating these critical practices into our everyday lives. In some cases, there is even blatant disregard by public figures who shortly after learn the widespread consequences of their negligence.¹ Some of these may require tough decisions and changes in our usual routines and protocols and will be critical to maintaining order in our city.

As we are seeing the continuous spread of COVID-19, any loss in first responders and other essential personnel will be felt heavily by our residents. Whether it may be an uptick in crime, slower response to medical emergencies, or the potential failure of our most basic infrastructure, these are realities that other places around the world such as Italy are already grappling with. While alarming, we need to have a frank discussion on how to keep those tasked with our city's essential services, healthy and abled to stay on the job.

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/03/12/rudy-gobert-mocked-coronavirus-utah-jazz/>